



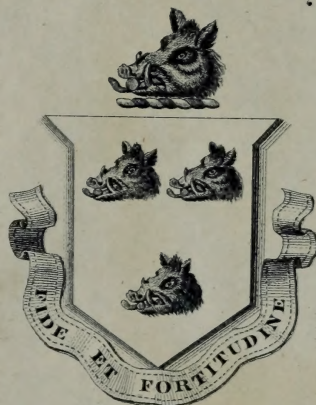
Accessions

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Thomas Pennant Barton.

Boston Public Library.

Received, May, 1873.

Not to be taken from the Library.

Sir

In answer to your note I

have in the first place to correct your
mistake in supposing that I am
connected to Mr Melrose although

I have been associated with the use
of some of his pictures of the Antone.

Will inform me what pictures
they surprise as belonging to them
I shall search among those in

my custody to see if any such
exist. Mr Melrose
will any

I remain Esq.

Library is now to be sold
as there is no other value

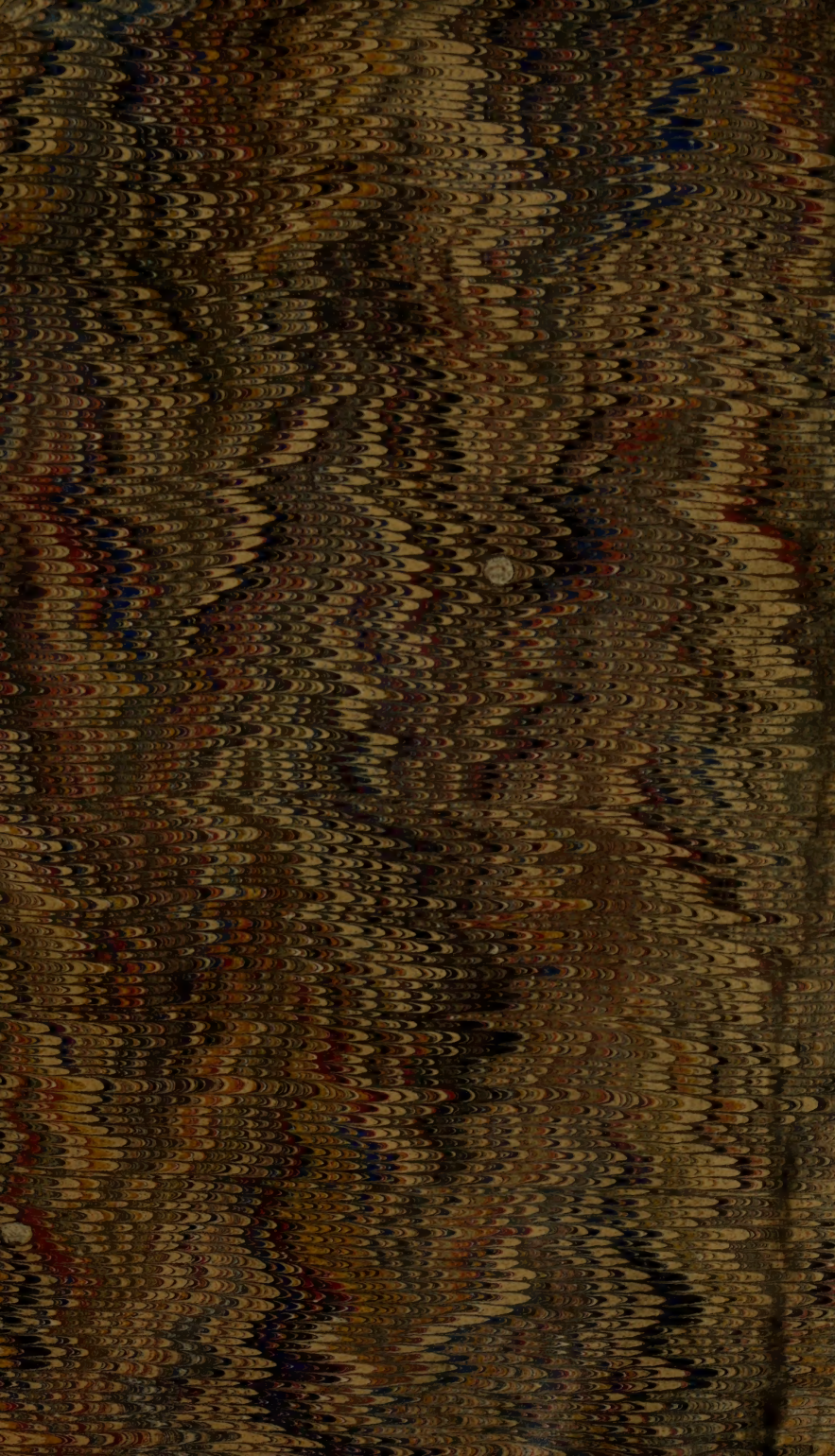
your letter should be

James Brown

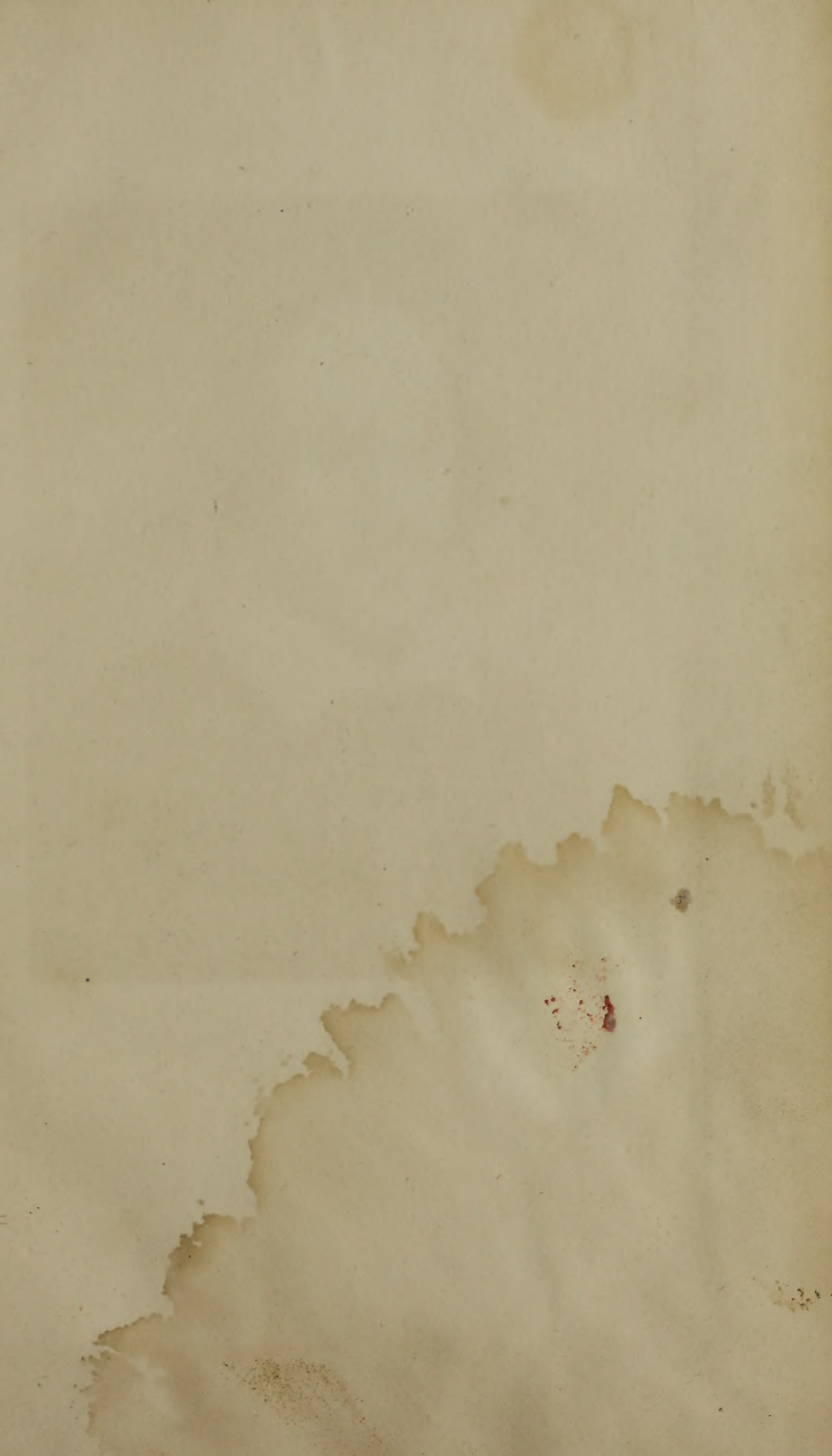
Thank Friday

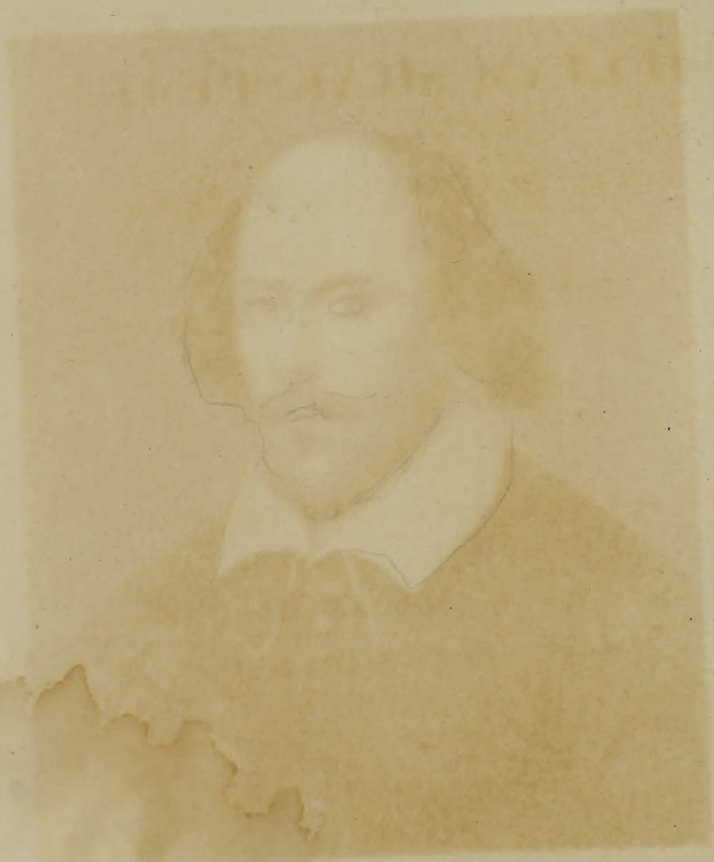
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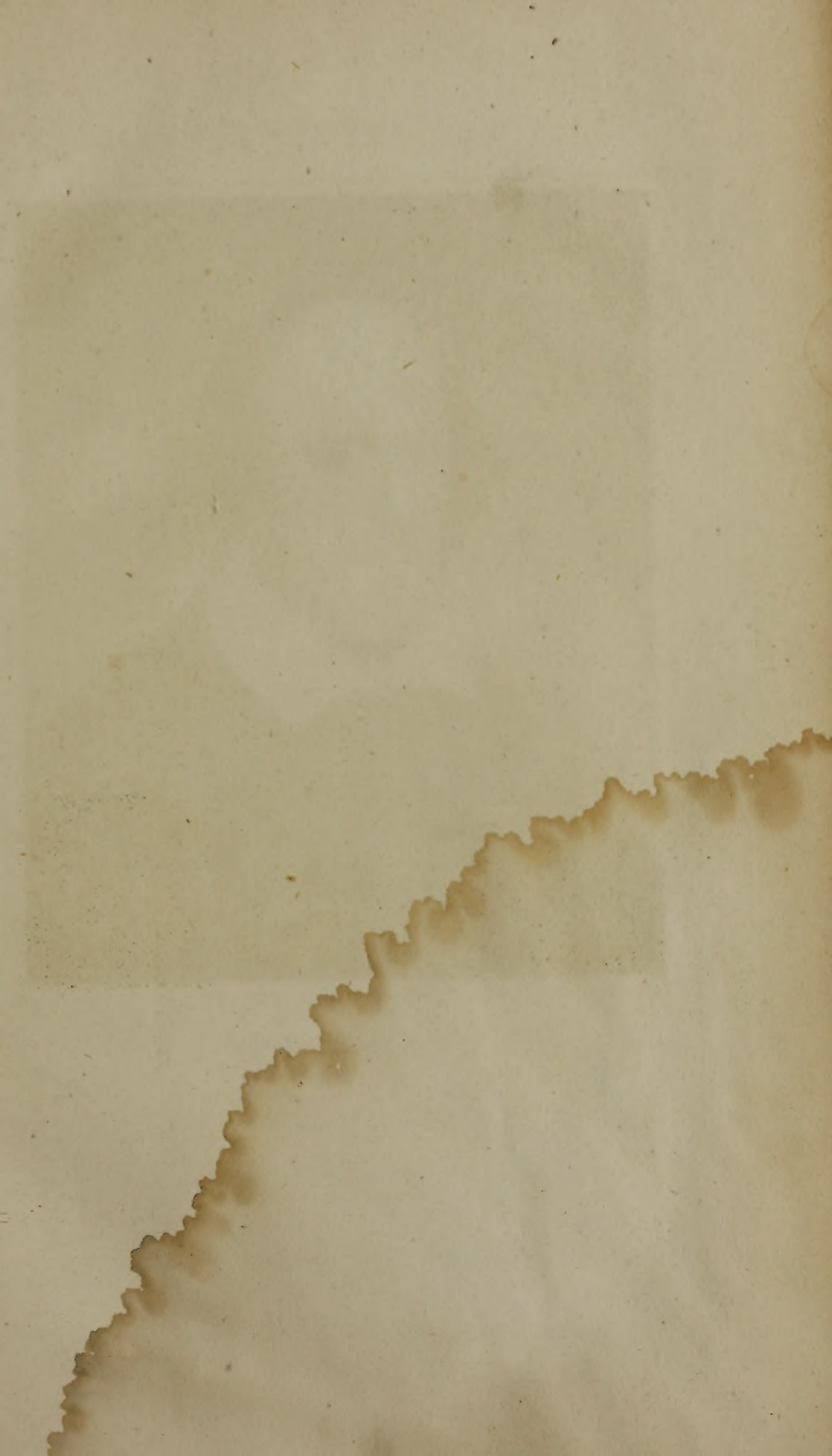
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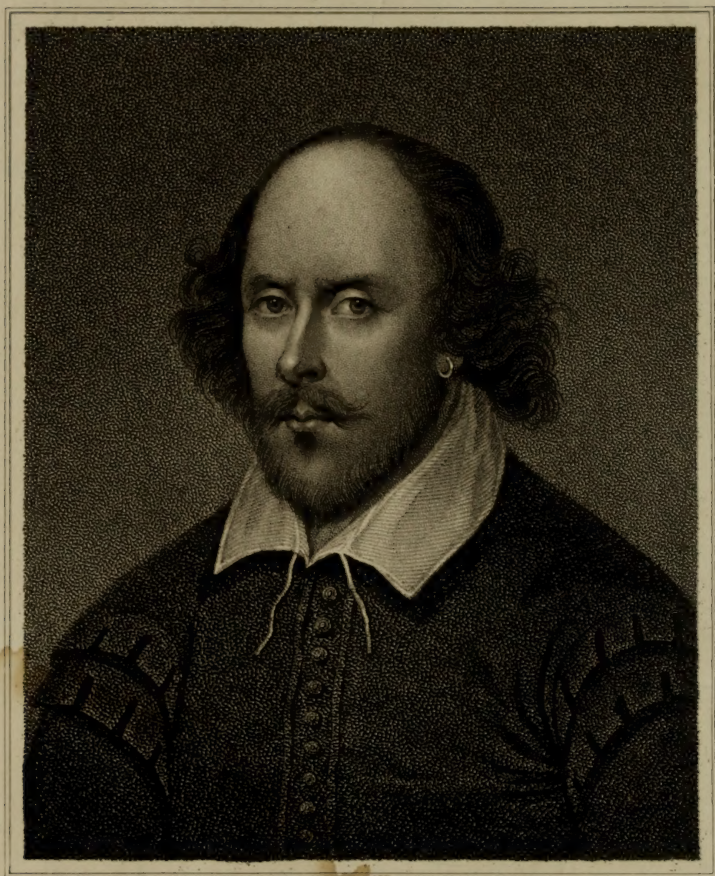












Fry sculp^t

WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE.

*From the Chandos Portrait in the
possession of the Marquis of Buckingham.*

London. Published by F. C. & J. Rivington & Partners. June 25th 1821.

THE
PLAYS AND POEMS
OF
WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE,
WITH THE
CORRECTIONS AND ILLUSTRATIONS
OF
VARIOUS COMMENTATORS:
COMPREHENDING
A Life of the Poet,
AND
AN ENLARGED HISTORY OF THE STAGE,
BY
THE LATE EDMOND MALONE.
WITH A NEW GLOSSARIAL INDEX.

ΤΗΣ ΦΤΣΕΩΣ ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΕΤΣ ΗΝ, ΤΟΝ ΚΑΛΑΜΟΝ
ΑΠΟΒΡΕΧΩΝ ΕΙΣ ΝΟΤΝ. *Vet. Auct apud. Suidam.*

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR F. C. AND J. RIVINGTON; T. EGERTON; J. CUTHELL; SCATCHERD
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1821.

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Aug. 1873

VOL. I. PROLEGOMENA.

ADVERTISEMENT
TO
THE PRESENT EDITION.
BY
MR. BOSWELL.

IF Mr. Malone had himself brought to a final completion the work upon which he had been for so many years assiduously employed, the name of that distinguished critick would have been a sufficient recommendation; and I should not have thought it necessary to attract the publick attention by any prefatory observations. But as this unfortunately was not the case, the reader may expect to be told, under what circumstances, and with what pretensions, the present editor appears before him, and what are the advantages which are supposed to be derived from the work he has undertaken to superintend. I will, as briefly as I can, supply this explanation.

The long and intimate friendship which subsisted between my father and Mr. Malone, introduced me to his acquaintance at a very early period of life; and in every succeeding portion of it I am bound to retain the most affectionate and grateful recollection of his uniform and uninterrupted kindness. When more advanced years had rendered me less unworthy of his society, I was permitted to enjoy it in the most unreserved and confidential manner, and was made a partaker of his literary views and

sentiments. It may well be imagined that in such an intercourse, the works of our immortal poet would be a topic of pretty frequent occurrence; and when he was finally preparing the result of his researches on that subject for the press, he availed himself of my assistance in the collection and arrangement of his scattered materials, which the gradual failure of his eyesight made every day more irksome and difficult to himself. From being in this way connected with his labours, he was accustomed sometimes, in a half-jocular tone, to say, that if any thing should prevent him from bringing them to a conclusion, that task must devolve upon me; but in his last illness he made this request to me in such terms, that I must have felt ashamed of myself for ever after, if I had hesitated for a moment in promising to execute his wishes to the utmost of my power. I am by no means disposed to deny that there are many who might have been more fitly selected for such a trust, from more extensive knowledge of the topics which such a work must embrace, and a longer experience in antiquarian research; but in some respects I had opportunities which did not fall to any other person's share. From constant communication with him on the subject of his opinions, I was better able to ascertain his final judgment on many contested points which occur in the illustration of our author's text, which, without that guidance, might have been frequently doubtful. As truth was the only object which he ever had in view, he was accustomed to note down every passage which he met with in his reading, whether it tended to fortify his own opinion, or add strength to that of his opponents, reserving them for future selection. To have given them all, would have swelled these volumes to an immeasurable size; and to have drawn my own conclusion, would have been "making one man write by the judgment of another:" a liberty which Dr. Johnson has observed no pretence can justify. I may add, that it is not every one that could have deciphered his notes. When he was not hurried he wrote a

very clear and an elegant hand ; but as his memory was far from tenacious, when any thing occurred which he thought might prove of use, he was in the habit of using the first scrap of paper which presented itself, and marking down his memoranda in a species of short hand, of which no one, who was not accustomed to his manner, could readily comprehend the meaning. I am far from pretending to say that, with all the advantages I enjoyed, I can hope to remedy the many imperfections which must unavoidably occur, when the mind which collected information can no longer superintend its disclosure ; and in some of the most important parts of his investigations, a chasm must be left which I am unable to supply ; yet still I can, with confidence, assert, that enough will remain to justify the publick expectation, and gratify the admirers of our greatest poet. Whatever may be the defects that shall be discovered in that portion of the work which has devolved upon me, which, I am aware, are many, and fear that more may be found, yet I trust to the candour of the reader, that he will keep in his recollection the circumstances which I have stated, and will not consider me as having thrust myself upon this employment from any over-weening confidence in my own abilities ; but as having undertaken it as a task in compliance with the last wishes of an ever dear friend. While the merits of this edition are to be ascribed to Mr. Malone, I need scarcely add that I am not responsible for the erroneous opinions which it contains, if such there be. There were several points upon which I was so far from coinciding with my late friend, that they have frequently led us into friendly controversy. I have felt myself bound to exhibit his sentiments, whether I thought them right or wrong, and should not have deemed myself justified in imposing upon the reader, when I laid before him what purported to be the work of Mr. Malone, a critick of high and established fame, by substituting opinions of my own ; nor have I, in general, added to these commentaries, too voluminous

already, by expressing my dissent; yet I confess that in the course of the long labours which I have had to undergo, I have not been able entirely to refrain from occasionally appearing in my own person; but I trust that in this respect I shall not be found to have been unreasonably or ostentatiously obtrusive. According to the plan laid down by Mr. Malone, I have inserted all the notes of his predecessors, although I am ready to admit that some of them might well have been spared. And here again I request it may be understood that my passing them over in silence, is not to be considered as acquiescing in their propriety. When, for instance, Mr. Ritson observes, that the reading of the quarto in Hamlet's celebrated soliloquy,

“ And enterprizes of great *pitch* and moment,”

is better: I should not wish it to be thought that I adopt his explanation, “ The allusion is to the *pitching* or throwing the bar—a manly exercise used in country villages.” In a very few instances I have ventured to take the liberty of expunging a note where Shakspeare has, I think, most perversely and injuriously been charged with an irreverent allusion to Scripture. When Proteus, in the Two Gentlemen of Verona, says to Speed, among many quibbles upon the word sheep, “ Nay, in that you are astray; ’twere best pound you!” what but the very cacoethes of commenting could lead any one to suppose, with Dr. Henley, that the poet had in view the general confession of sins in the liturgy? I am confident that it is from illustrations such as these that Shakspeare has laid under the heavy imputation of prophaneness, much more than from any offences of that kind of which he has really been guilty; but even if such had been his meaning, it is surely much better that it should be passed over than pointed out. There are some annotations reprehensible in another point of view, which I should gladly have omitted, but they have so long retained their places, that such an expurgatory liberty seemed to me to be going beyond the bounds

of my "limited service." I have, however, been scrupulous in not adding to their number.

But while I am ready to acknowledge with Mr. Steevens (who, by the way, at the very time when he made this remark, was adding more copiously to his notes, and indulging to a greater extent in collateral discussions, than any other critick), that among the defects of the later editions of Shakspeare, may be reckoned an exuberance of comment; yet I cannot but think that this charge has been advanced with too much exaggeration. We have been told by a distinguished contemporary, that passages are explained in which no man, woman, or child, could have found any difficulty. But if we look to the editions of Pope and Johnson, we shall frequently meet with mistakes which would be obvious to persons of the slightest acquirements in the present day. It will certainly not be maintained that the great mass of mankind are endowed with more natural perspicacity than the two illustrious individuals whom I have named; and hence their superior intelligence must be attributed to their having access to new sources of information in the collected labours of those who have since investigated the poet's works; and therefore, even if in a few instances, somewhat more information has been bestowed than was absolutely required, it is rather an ungrateful return, on the part of living readers, to speak with contempt of criticks, by whose assistance they have been elevated above those so much their superiors in natural size. It has also been objected, that illustrations of obsolete phrases and manners from Shakspeare's contemporaries, have been too lavishly brought forward; but it may admit of a question whether this has not been, in some degree, compensated by the effect which it has had no small share in producing on the general literature of the country, by drawing the attention of the publick, much more than was generally the case at any former period, to the neglected writers of an early age. The slightest reference which

can be drawn from the works of Shakspeare to a forgotten poet, has had the effect of a stone thrown from the hand of Deucalion, and raised him at once into life. This may perhaps have been carried too far, and the zeal which has been exerted in collecting all the remains of the Elizabethan age, may perhaps, in some cases, have been inordinate; but it is surely preferable to the ignorance which prevailed on this subject not more than a century ago, when the knowledge of our literature was confined within so narrow a compass, that as far as intellectual eminence was concerned, we appeared to be a nation of yesterday. Our early writers, with all the faults of an untutored taste, had merits sufficient to redeem them from the oblivion to which they had been consigned. They were marble in the quarry, it is true, but still they were marble, and formed of those durable materials, which have at length obtained for English genius, that rank in Europe which the feebler muse of France had so long exclusively and unjustly usurped.

It was the object of Mr. Malone, from which he never deviated, to furnish the reader, as far as it was possible, with the author's unsophisticated text. In acting upon this principle he had at first the concurrence and even the example of Mr. Steevens to guide him. They both professed to follow the old copies with scrupulous fidelity, except where a clear necessity compelled them to depart from the readings which they supplied. To this plan it will be found Mr. Malone has still steadily adhered, while his rival critick has latterly adopted maxims directly contrary to the opinions which he formerly maintained. Corruptions have been supposed to exist in the phraseology of Shakspeare, which, in some instances, are not altogether obsolete in the present day; and the free versification of the poet has been lengthened or curtailed as suited the commentator's caprice, to bring it within the strict regularity which has been enjoined by the school of Pope. In proposing these corrections, as Mr. Steevens endeavours

to represent them, and in pointing out the fancied errors of the earlier copies, he has generally had recourse to ridicule, a weapon of which he was as fond, as he was skilful in its use. This mode of discussion gave him great advantages when the passages upon which it arose were scattered throughout a number of volumes, from which a great proportion of readers would be unwilling to take the pains of collecting a system of criticism for themselves; but would rather be content with acquiescing in opinions so pleasantly and humorously conveyed. Mr. Malone, to obviate this effect (in some measure, I believe, at my recommendation), determined to bring these topicks into one connected view, and therefore prepared materials for an express Essay on the Metre and Phraseology of Shakspeare, in which he had made considerable progress, but which, I am sorry to say, he did not live to complete. I have taken some pains upon this subject, and have ventured to add the result of my reading to what my friend has left behind him. In another department of this work I have put myself to a good deal of unnecessary trouble, if the decision of Mr. Steevens should be considered as well founded, where he has ridiculed the notion that any advantage was to be derived from further and more accurate collation of the text; but upon this subject I must presume to say, that I cannot consider him as the best authority. Whatever were the qualities necessary for an editor which he possessed, and it would not be easy to point out a man who had more, yet he laboured under a marked deficiency in this respect, from the very first commencement of his critical career. His republication of the early quartos of Shakspeare in 1766, is one of the most grossly incorrect performances that I have ever seen; and his edition of our poet's plays, in conjunction with Dr. Johnson in 1773, was scarcely less objectionable. The following passage from the advertisement which he then prefixed, see p. 173, will show his notions of the unimportance of collation; and will enable me to apprise

the reader of the different view which I have taken of an editor's duty. "The dialogue might indeed be sometimes lengthened by yet other insertions then have been made, but without advantage either to its spirit or beauty; as in the following instance:—[Lear, Act II. Sc. IV.]

"*Lear.* No.

"*Kent.* Yes.

"*Lear.* No, I say.

"*Kent.* I say, yea."

"Here the quartos add:

"*Lear.* No, no, they would not.

"*Kent.* Yes, they have."

"By the admission of this negation and affirmation, would any new idea be gained?" If it were the object of a dramattick writer to convey his ideas with all possible brevity, I should allow the force of this interrogation; but it should be left to the reader to determine whether this iteration of words, without any additional meaning, does not give us a more lively picture of the cholerick monarch, and the blunt freedom which characterizes the faithful Kent. Mr. Steevens, however, seems to have altered his opinion in this instance; for in his subsequent edition of 1778, these unimportant words are admitted into the text. In the commencement of Hamlet's interview with Ophelia, I have printed in the body of the work what Mr. Malone appears to have selected as the preferable reading, that of the quarto:

"*Ophelia.* ————— Good, my Lord,

"How does your honour for this many a day?

"*Hamlet.* I humbly thank you; well."

But I have pointed out in the margin, that the folio gives this passage with the word *well* twice repeated, because others may think with myself, that this iteration is naturally suited to the irritable state of Hamlet's perturbed mind. As I have by no means set down all the variations,

or even the greater part of them, which occur in the different copies, for in that case, how few would have the patience to examine so copious a list with any degree of attention, I shall here explain the rules by which I have been guided in making a selection. In *Romeo and Juliet*, where the earliest quarto has all the appearance of being an imperfect sketch by the author himself, I have given the various readings very much in detail, as it is a matter of interesting curiosity, should this conjecture be correct, to trace the progress of his mind from his first thoughts to his more improved conceptions. In other plays, wherever I thought there might be a doubt with the reader, as to which copy had given most correctly what the author was likely to have written, I have afforded him an opportunity of judging for himself, by laying both before him. In the old editions we perpetually find a plural substantive governing a singular verb, which has generally been corrected by all the modern criticks, Mr. Malone among the rest; perhaps with some inconsistency on his part, as he has, on other occasions, contended in favour of phraseology as far removed from modern usage; but, that the reader may be aware of the nature of the alterations which have been made, I have, in some of the earlier plays, exhibited a few of these supposed grammatical anomalies; which, however, I am inclined to think were neither the blunders of a printer, nor the mistakes of a careless writer; but consonant to the universal practice of that age, even among the learned. Where a word is to be met with either in the folio or quarto, which by no error of the press could have been substituted for another, but which the commentators have passed over unnoticed, as it should seem, from their not discovering any meaning which it could bear, I have thought it the more necessary for that very reason, to put it in the view of those who might be better able to explain it. Thus in *Troilus and Cressida*, where Nestor says, addressing Hector:

“ And I have seen thee pause, and take thy breath,
 “ When that a ring of Greeks have *hemm'd* thee in”—

For *hemm'd* the quarto has *shrupt*, which is, I confess, to me, unintelligible ; but in the same manner, *beteem* in Hamlet,

“ That he might not *beteem* the winds of heaven
 “ Visit her face too roughly,”

was for a long period supposed to be a corruption, till a passage in Golding's Ovid ascertained that it was a word of our author's time. This, indeed, is one of the principal advantages derived from exhibiting our collations. The earlier copies are of rare occurrence, and can only be procured by a fortunate chance, or at an immoderate price ; but it by no means follows, that those alone who have access to those expensive rarities, are capable of using what they contain. A gentleman residing in one of the remote counties of England, from that very circumstance is much more likely to explain to us the meaning of a term, which, although from the changes that our language has undergone, it may now be confined to a particular province, may formerly have been in general use throughout the country. There are some passages which, after all that has been said upon them, are still in want of a satisfactory interpretation : of this, Iago's contemptuous mention of Cassio, “ a fellow almost *damn'd* in a fair wife,” may be produced as an instance. It may possibly be a corruption, and if so, the original spelling *dambd* should be preserved as a guide to critical conjecture. In a very few instances I have given readings, both from the folio and the quarto, which have nothing to recommend them, but are palpably and sometimes ludicrously erroneous : I have done so, in order to show how necessary it is to collate them all, and how ill founded are the assertions of those who, like the late Mr. Horne Tooke, being possessed of no other ancient copy than the first folio, have endeavoured to contend for its exclusive authority.

In speaking of the sources from which the means of ascertaining the authentick text of Shakspeare, may, with the greatest probability be derived, it will be necessary to say a few words upon the question which has been long agitated between Mr. Malone and Mr. Steevens, with respect to the comparative merits of the first and second folio. Mr. Malone, from a careful examination of those two copies, which enabled him to discover a number of corruptions in the latter edition, evidently as he thought arising from the editor's ignorance of our poet's phraseology, *determined* to reject it, *as an authority* altogether, while, notwithstanding, he was willing to admit into his text, corrections of typographical errors, or other suggestions which recommended themselves, by their own probability; in the same way as he adopted a few of the emendations of Pope or Hanmer, although he considered those criticks as having in general unwarrantably sophisticated the poet's text. Mr. Steevens, on the contrary, not only has upheld throughout the superiority of the second folio, but has availed himself of every opportunity to speak with the most unqualified contempt of, what he terms, its blundering predecessor. With an adroitness peculiar to himself in controversy, he has endeavoured to show Mr. Malone in contradiction to himself, by pointing out the many instances in which Mr. Malone has adopted the readings of that very edition which he has so much decried. There is something which at first appears to carry great weight with it in the seeming accuracy of an arithmetical statement; and accordingly, with the assistance of Mr. Plym-sell (see his Preface, p. 272,) he has laid before the reader a list of no less than 186 passages, in which the aid of that copy has been resorted to. He has not, however, thought it necessary to mention how many of these adopted corrections were words, and even letters accidentally dropped out at the press, which it required no very great portion of skill or industry to discover and amend;

and when this seemingly large number is divided among thirty-four plays, it will be found that the average proportion to each, even of these slight emendations, will not appear to be very considerable. If, on the other hand, we were to enumerate the instances in which the second folio has been deserted by Mr. Steevens himself, we shall form a still less estimate of its value. I cannot say that I have undertaken the same laborious investigation that Mr. Plymsell has gone through; but in a cursory inspection of *King Lear*, I have discovered ten of them in the first act alone. It is not easy to suppose that this could have happened if the second folio had corrected the defects of the first from early manuscripts or authentick information*. Mr. Steevens intimates his opinion, that when Mr. Malone speaks of the editor of this republication, he is pointing his artillery at a phantom; “for perhaps no such literary agent as an editor of a poetical work, unaccompanied by comments, was at that period to be found.” He adds, that “this office, if any where, was vested in the printer, who transferred it to his compositors; and these worthies discharged their part of the trust with a proportionate mixture of ignorance and inattention†.” He proceeds, in the following page, to describe, in still stronger terms, their utter insufficiency for their employment. But if this were the case, how are we to account for the other part of his theory? Who was it that collected the authentick information, or examined the early manuscripts of which he has so confidently spoken? Where was that “judicious hand” which regulated the grammatical anomalies, and smoothed the metre which had been left in so rugged a state by Heminges and Condell in the original publication? More, however, on this subject, will be met with in the list of the early editions of our poet, vol. ii. where the reader will find Mr. Malone’s

* See Mr. Steevens’s Advertisement, p. 271.

† Ibid. p. 268.

conjectures as to who this person was. In publishing this edition of Shakspeare, the plan laid down by Mr. Malone was, to exhibit all his dramas in what he considered to be, from the best judgment he could form, their chronological order, that the reader might be thus enabled to trace the progress of the author's powers, from his first and imperfect essays, to those more finished performances which he afterwards produced. I have adopted that arrangement as far as his miscellaneous plays are concerned; but found it universally objected to by all whom I had an opportunity to consult, if it were made to comprehend the plays which were founded on English history. I have therefore, thus far, ventured to deviate from my late friend's intention, and have placed the historical plays in a separate class. Enough will still remain to fulfil the object which Mr. Malone had in view. The *Tempest* will no longer precede *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and the *Comedy of Errors*, by which those who were not attentive to dates, might have been led to form very erroneous conclusions as to the inequality of Shakspeare's genius.

We shall now find his powers gradually developed as his knowledge became more extensive, and his judgment matured. In his first essays he will appear seemingly unconscious of his strength, assimilating himself, in some degree, to the models before him. Soon after we see him with "casted slough and fresh legerity," entering upon a hitherto untrodden path, creating, as it were, anew the drama of his country, and exhibiting a brilliancy of fancy, an energy, and a pathos, which till now had been unknown upon our stage. Advancing in his progress to excellence, we shall probably be led to fix upon the middle period of his life, as the time when his genius was at its meridian. The productions that followed, although every way worthy of their great author, yet still fell short of that fervid inspiration to which we owe those wonderful performances, which, according to Mr. Malone's hypothesis,

are ascribed to a period from about the thirty-fourth to the forty-first year of his life. The mind may, indeed, repose with delight upon the mild splendour of the *Tempest*; but in claiming for Shakspeare the title of the sovereign of the drama, as the first of our criticks has styled him, we must look to *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *Lear*, and, above all, to the flood of glory which bursts upon us from *Macbeth*. Here it will be gratifying to pause for a moment, and to contemplate the gradual increase of our great poet's reputation during the course of the second century which has elapsed since his death. Even at the time when Johnson wrote his admirable preface, not only was the knowledge of his excellence almost wholly confined to his own countrymen, but even among them there were not a few who were disposed to adopt, in some degree, the petty objections which had been thrown out by the spleen of Voltaire; and the alterations which Garrick, in the spirit of French criticism, presumed to make in *Hamlet*, of which a fuller account is given in the second volume, will tend to show how imperfectly he was understood by one of his warmest admirers. If we go back to an earlier period, we shall find the general reader still less acquainted with his merits, till at last we revert to that age of critical darkness, when he was reviled by Rymer, and patronized by Tate. If an Englishman of the present day were to indulge in such ribaldry as the first of these two persons poured forth upon *Othello*, he would nearly run a risk of meeting with the punishment of Zoilus. Nor is it among our own countrymen alone that his superiority is now acknowledged. Even in France, which has always been remarkable for a bigotted attachment to its own literature, a tardy and unwilling tribute has been paid to the genius of Shakspeare; but it is in Germany, above all, that the highest enthusiasm has been excited on the subject of his works. The most distinguished writers of that country have contended with each other in offering homage to

his name, among whom we are bound particularly to notice M. Schlegel. I am far from saying that I adopt all that critick's opinions; nor can I think that such a man would estimate very highly either the sincerity or value of indiscriminate praise. It must be matter of astonishment, that one who so well appreciates the genuine works of Shakspeare, could be led, for a moment, to suppose that such trash as Locrine and Lord Cromwell proceeded from his pen. They are evidently not only unworthy of the great name to which they have been ascribed, but are scarcely even the productions of the second-rate poets of that day. Other objections may be made to M. Schlegel. He is sometimes perhaps too refined; and too enthusiastick for our colder and more didactick style of criticism; there is, occasionally, too much metaphysical curiosity in his analysis; he is inclined to make Shakspeare, who wrote for the people, too much of a poetical mystick; in short, he has endeavoured to give him more of a German cast of thinking than really belonged to him; but after all the deductions which candour can make, there will still remain sufficient ground for the general admiration which has been bestowed upon a work at once so eloquent and so profound.

But to return to humbler topicks: I must say a few words as to the arrangement adopted in the following volumes. In the first I have printed the prefaces which have been prefixed to the modern editions of the poet, among which Mr. Rowe's Life, as being partly prefatory and partly biographical, may be classed. Notwithstanding its defects in the second point of view, I should not have thought myself justified in omitting it altogether; but it will no longer be found accompanied with notes, which were written for the purpose of demolishing almost every statement which it contained. These are now incorporated in Mr. Malone's more extensive and correct work on the same subject. The remainder of the volume is occupied by various critical dissertations on our author's works, among which the reader will find an Essay on the Phrase-

ology and Metre of Shakspeare; and the Commendatory Poems. These were originally destined for the second volume, which, however, became of so unexpected a bulk, that I was compelled to alter my arrangement, that I might not add to its already disproportioned size. As I was anxious that the work altogether should not in its compass exceed the later editions of Mr. Steevens, notwithstanding the accession of much additional matter, I have been induced to print this part of it in a rather smaller type. The second volume contains Mr. Malone's Life of Shakspeare, accompanied by explanatory documents; a list of the early editions of his works, more fully described than heretofore; and other matters relating to the poet's history. The Essay on the Chronology of Shakspeare's Plays was originally distinct; and I cannot, with confidence, say that Mr. Malone would not have so continued it: but it appeared to me, that the life of a writer must be strangely defective which contained no account of his works; and I have, therefore, ventured to give it a place as one of the sections of Mr. Malone's Biography. The reader, I have no doubt, will derive no small satisfaction from the many curious particulars which my late friend's research enabled him to collect upon this subject; yet I cannot but lament that much has unquestionably been lost, which, had he lived to superintend this edition himself, he would have furnished. It was his intention to have devoted one section to the manners and customs of Shakspeare's time; but I found the materials which he had prepared for this enquiry in so loose and disjointed a state, that I could not have ventured upon the labour of arranging them without protracting the publication of this work to a distant period. I may remark that his memoranda did not appear to relate to matters which had any direct reference to what bears upon the drama; but are rather illustrative of the general political state of the country. I need scarcely add, that, although I was unable, for the reason I have stated, to make use of his collections on this subject, at

least for the present, I have scrupulously abstained from destroying a single scrap of his literary remains. The third volume contains the History of the Stage, with his own corrections, and the addition of some very curious new matter. Some valuable documents which had escaped my attention at the time when this part of the work was printed off, are preserved among the Addenda, in the twenty-first volume. Those who are interested in dramattick history, and are fond of tracing our early literature in its rudest form, will unite with me in expressing their satisfaction that my friend, Mr. Markland, has permitted me to lay before the publick, upon this occasion, his valuable Essay on the Chester Mysteries. I have also retained the extracts which Mr. Reed had given from Mr. Chalmers. The succeeding sixteen volumes are appropriated to the plays. The text has been printed according to the principle laid down by Mr. Malone, of adhering as strictly as possible to the ancient copies; and wherever they are deviated from, the reader is apprised of the alteration, and of the reasons upon which it is founded. The numerous sophistications introduced by Mr. Steevens have been removed; but it has not been thought necessary to enter into a contest about each individual passage; as the system upon which he proceeded is sufficiently discussed in the Essay on Phraseology and Metre. I have, therefore, for the most part, considered it sufficient to head those notes in which the original text has been disturbed, with the reading which he wished to substitute, that the reader may have a full opportunity of fixing his own value upon those supposed improvements. In some of Mr. Steevens's comments, and, in a very few instances, in those of Mr. Malone, the reader will find an insertion which it is proper to explain. The suggestions of Mr. Jennens of Gopsal, and of Mr. Capell, having sometimes been adopted without acknowledgment; wherever I discovered that such was the case, I have consulted brevity, while I was at the same time willing to do those criticks justice, by merely putting these words between

brackets [" as Mr. Capell," or " as Mr. Jennens, has observed."] I may have omitted, perhaps, to have traced Mr. Capell's prior claim upon some occasions; for I confess that I have often shrunk from the great and often fruitless labour of attempting to discover his meaning*. Never was there a writer who appeared to have taken more pains to show that language, in his opinion, was not intended to communicate our ideas; but I can sincerely state that I have never wished to conceal his merits, when they have fallen under my knowledge. In one respect, however, I am bound to say he has done great and important service, I mean in his care of the punctuation, which I mention here once for all, as it is a praise which it would

* I will take this opportunity of restoring to him an emendation which is his property. In *The Taming of the Shrew*, see vol. v. p. 441, Biondello, as the speech is given in the folio, exclaims, on entering, " Master, master! news, and such news as you never heard of." Mr. Rowe, perceiving that the answer of Baptista, " Is it new and *old* too?" was thus unintelligible, read " Master, master! *old* news." Mr. Capell thought the passage would be more spirited, if we read, "*news, old* news;" and so it has since been printed in the text, but without any mention of his name. I will subjoin his note as an unusually favourable instance of his mode of expressing himself.

" ' Master, master! &c.' As this speaker's reply could not have run in such terms as we see it does, unless ' old ' had stood somewhere, moderns all consent in inserting it; but the place chosen by them, is after ' Master.' This editor has looked on *old* and *news* too, as words omitted by accident; judging, that Biondello should first come out with ' news!' and branch it afterwards, such branching being more in the order of nature's working, and the period is made fuller and rounder by it."

Moderns is the only term which Mr. Capell applies to former editors, whom he never mentions by name; but styles Rowe, Pope, Theobald, &c. first, second, or third modern. Sir Thomas Hanmer is, indeed, sometimes described as " he of Oxford:" and Johnson is thus corrected: " cunning is wrong interpreted by *he* who brings up the rear of them."

have been endless to have bestowed upon him in detail. The twentieth volume contains the poems of Shakspeare, carefully printed from the original copies, an addition to the work of which the gibes of Mr. Steevens will not, I am confident, diminish the value. In the last volume Titus Andronicus and Pericles are preserved; but by being placed after the poems, are thus distinguished from what are acknowledged on all hands to have been entirely the genuine productions of our author, excepting the three parts of Henry VI., which have been suffered to retain their place as forming part of the historical series. Some Addenda follow, and the whole is concluded with a new glossarial index. In this, the humblest, but perhaps not the least useful department of the work, I have introduced what I hope will be considered as improvements. In the glossarial index of former editions, the reader has merely been presented with a long list of words, and references to the passages where they occur, often with very different meanings; and is thus called upon to roam over many volumes, in order to form a glossary for himself. I have thought that it would diminish his labour, though not a little adding to my own, if, wherever the various commentators agree in their explanation of a term, I affixed that explanation in the index; where they differ, I have not assumed the office of a judge, but have left the reader to decide for himself. In other points also I have deviated from my predecessors. Their index contained only the words which were found in the text, whether selected from conflicting copies, or modern emendations. Upon this plan, if the reading of the quartos is preferred, that of the folio is passed over unnoticed; and if both are discarded, they are no longer to be found in what derives its value from being an exhibition of Shakspearian phraseology. Thus, if we wish to find where a contested passage is to be met with, such as the line in Antony and Cleopatra—

“ And soberly did mount an *armgaunt* steed—”

we shall find no such word as *armgaunt* in Mr. Steevens's index, but only *termagant*, which has, most erroneously, in my opinion, been substituted in its place. I have given throughout the readings of both the folio and quartos, as far as their variations were of sufficient importance to be mentioned in the notes or the margin.

To this edition an engraving from what is commonly known by the name of the Chandos portrait of Shakespeare, now in the possession of the Marquis of Buckingham, has been prefixed. The history of that picture will be found towards the close of Mr. Malone's Life of the Poet; but it will be necessary to say a few words in reply to the arguments (if such they may be called) with which Mr. Steevens has endeavoured to call in question its authenticity, but which never were brought forward till it had been engraved with more than former care and elegance for Mr. Malone's edition in 1790. It has been traced, as is fully stated by Mr. Malone in the passage already referred to, through the Duke of Chandos to his father-in-law, Mr. Nicoll; thence to Mr. Keck, a very curious collector; thence to Mrs. Barry; thence to Mr. Betterton, who procured it after the death of Sir William D'Avenant, to whom it had belonged. Such a chain of traditional evidence is seldom to be found in pedigrees of this description; and therefore Mr. Steevens, resorting to his usual weapon of ridicule, has endeavoured to weaken it by forming its links into a ludicrous compound, and styling this portrait the D'Avenantico-Bettertonian-Barryan-Keckian-Nicolcian-Chandosian *canvas**. The last word is printed by him in italicks, in order to intimate that the picture being painted on that material, is a proof of its not being genuine. I have the authority of the present accomplished President of the Royal Academy for saying

* See Mr. Richardson's Proposals, p. 291. It will scarcely be necessary to inform the reader, that these Proposals were written by Mr. Steevens.

that such a remark is wholly groundless. That no such portrait could have belonged to D'Avenant, is attempted to be shown by a humorous denial of the tradition handed down to us by Aubrey, that Sir William was our poet's son ; and a pleasant remark by Mr. Warton is quoted, that " he cannot suppose Shakspeare to have been the father of a Doctor of Divinity, that never laughed ;" which only goes to prove that Shakspeare could not have been the father of D'Avenant's brother. But without giving any credence to this antiquated scandal (for the truth of which I have certainly no wish to contend), Sir William was certainly Shakspeare's god-son ; was likely, without any connection of this sort, to have been desirous of obtaining his resemblance, from admiration of his genius ; and so nearly his contemporary as to have the means of ascertaining, either by his own recollection, or from others, how far it was correct. Of Betterton, Mr. Steevens has said nothing, but proceeds per saltum to the purchase of this picture by Mr. Keck from Mrs. Barry. " The possession of somewhat more animated than canvas, might have been included, though not specified in a bargain with an actress of acknowledged gallantry." It is difficult to deal with an argument that only supposes that something *might* have happened ; but it may as fairly be observed, that a picture is not generally thrown into the bargain in negotiations of this nature. The authority of Sir Joshua Reynolds is covertly introduced against the authenticity of this portrait, he having, we are told, " suggested that *whatever person it was designed for*, it might have been left, as it now appears, in an unfinished state*!" In opposition to this insinuation, Mr. Malone has remarked, that when, by the permission of the Duke of Chandos, he had a drawing from the original, made by Mr. Ozias Humphrey, Sir Joshua was frequently present during its progress, and himself, although this portrait is said to have been " the

* Mr. Steevens's Advertisement, p. 253.

shadow of a shade," contrived to produce a copy of it, without any supplement whatever, for Dr. Newton, the Bishop of Bristol, which Mr. Malone afterwards purchased; and during the long intimacy which subsisted between my late friend and that great painter, never intimated a suspicion that this portrait was not a genuine representation of Shakspeare.

Mr. Steevens was satisfied for some years with decrying all the existing portraits of Shakspeare, but latterly adopted a new hypothesis; and having rejected the Chandos canvas, as not having sufficient evidence in its favour, advanced the pretensions of another portrait, which confessedly was not supported by any evidence at all, but, on the contrary, was ushered into the world with a story which he himself has shown to be false*. The whole circumstances attending its discovery, which are detailed in Mr. Richardson's Proposals†, will forcibly remind us of Mr. Steevens's own words, when speaking of the Chandos portrait, but which are much more applicable to that which he endeavoured to recommend to the publick. "Much respect is due to the authority of portraits that descend in families from heir to heir; but little reliance can be placed on them when they are produced for sale (as in the present instance) by alien hands, almost a century after the death of the person supposed to be represented; and then (as Edmund says in *King Lear*), 'come pat, like the catastrophe of the old comedy.' Shakspeare was buried in 1616; and in 1708 the first notice of this picture occurs. Where there is such a chasm in evidence, the validity of it may well be questioned, and especially by those who remember a species of fraudulence recorded in Mr. Foote's *Taste*, "Clap Lord Dupe's arms on that half-length of Erasmus; I have sold it him as his great grand-father's third brother, for

* Mr. Steevens's Advertisement, p. 253.

† Mr. Richardson's Proposals, p. 290.

fifty guineas *.” In support of the Felton portrait, another century must be added to the demands made upon our credulity; and the patching and doctoring which this picture required before any thing could be made of it, will not, perhaps, place its authority on a much higher ground than that of Lord Dupe’s ancestor. There are not, indeed, wanting those who suspect that Mr. Steevens was better acquainted with the history of its manufacture, and that there was a deeper meaning in his words, when he tells us, “he was instrumental in procuring it†,” than he would have wished to be generally understood; and that the fabricator of the Hardiknutian tablet had been trying his ingenuity upon a more important scale. My venerable friend, the late Mr. Bindley, of the Stamp-office, was reluctantly persuaded, by his importunity, to attest his opinion in favour of this picture, which he did in deference to the judgment of one so well acquainted with Shakspeare; but happening to glance his eye upon Mr. Steevens’s face, he instantly perceived, by the triumph depicted in the peculiar expression of his countenance, that he had been deceived. If any thing more were necessary to destroy its credit, it would be found in what he himself has stated—that it was seen by Lord Leicester, and Horace Walpole [Lord Orford], who both believed it to be genuine; yet neither of them would purchase it for five pounds!! The proprietors of this edition were not desirous of having it re-engraved, and I had no wish to give further currency to what Mr. Malone did not hesitate to declare a fabrication, although I have preserved Mr. Steevens’s amusing essays in its defence. The publick, however, naturally feel anxious to be put in possession of any thing which purports upon probable grounds to exhibit to us the features of gentle Shakspeare; and, therefore, it is with great satisfaction that I have prefixed to the second volume of this work, an engraving from a miniature, in the possession of Sir James Bland Burges,

* Mr. Steevens’s Advertisement, p. 255.

† Ibid. p. 82.

which infinitely better judges than myself have pronounced to bear the strongest marks of authenticity. The account which I received of it from Sir James, I will take the liberty to subjoin in his own words :

“ Lower Brook-street,
26th June, 1818.

“ Dear Boswell,

“ I SEND you the history of my portrait of Shakspeare, which I apprehend will leave no reason to doubt of its authenticity.

“ Mr. Somerville of Edstone, near Stratford-upon-Avon, ancestor of Somerville, author of the *Chace*, &c. lived in habits of intimacy with Shakspeare, particularly after his retirement from the stage, and had this portrait painted, which, as you will perceive, was richly set, and was carefully preserved by his descendants, till it came to the hands of his great grand-son, the poet, who, dying in 1742, without issue, left his estates to my grand-father, Lord Somerville, and gave this miniature to my mother. She valued it very highly, as well for the sake of the donor, as for that of the great genius of which it was the representative ; and I well remember that, when I was a boy, its production was not unfrequently a very acceptable reward of my good behaviour. After my mother's death, I sought in vain for this and some other family relics, and at length had abandoned all hope of ever finding them, when chance most unexpectedly restored them to me about ten days ago, in consequence of the opening of a bureau which had belonged to my mother, in a private drawer of which this and the other missing things were found.

“ Believe me to be,

“ Dear Boswell,

“ Yours most truly,

“ J. B. BURGESS.”

Having, by the kindness of Sir James, been indulged with the loan of this miniature for some time, I submitted

it to the inspection of many of the most distinguished members of the Royal Academy, and to several antiquarian friends. In consequence of their decision in its favour, I have availed myself of the kind liberality of its possessor; and an engraving from it, through the recommendation of Sir Thomas Lawrence and Mr. Phillips, has been procured from that excellent artist Mr. Agar. In addition to this, a representation of the poet's bust at Stratford will adorn the present edition.

Mr. Steevens, for reasons which he has assigned*, but which I can by no means think satisfactory, has omitted, in his later editions, a list of errata. "It has been customary (says he) with not a few authors, to acknowledge small mistakes, that they might escape the suspicion of greater, or, perhaps, to intimate that no greater could be detected." That a duty has by some persons been imperfectly performed, is no sufficient reason why others should neglect it altogether; nor can the deceit, which he insinuates has sometimes been practised, render it less incumbent on an honest editor to correct the errors, into which he may have fallen, when they come to his knowledge. I gladly avail myself of his appeal to the candour of the reader, who, if he is at all acquainted with the press, must be aware of the difficulties attending upon the publication of a voluminous work, which, on the present occasion, would have given rise to many more mistakes, had I not been, throughout, assisted by the diligence and acuteness of my corrector of the press, Mr. Woodham. Among them, I am obliged to reckon some defects, arising from haste, which I have discovered in my own style. A table of errata will be given at the close of the last volume; but with no assumption, on my part, that more may not yet be found; I can only say that I have done all which an inexperienced eye would furnish me with the means of doing.

It was my wish and intention to have abstained, in the

* See his Advertisement, p. 275.

gladly recalled whatever he had before mistakingly asserted. That the notion of Jonson's hostility to Shakspeare was of no modern date, it will not require many words to prove. It was not only handed down, as Mr. Gifford states, from Mr. Malone to Mr. Weber, but from Dryden, through almost every intermediate writer, to Mr. Malone. So strong, indeed, according to Mr. Gifford, was the general feeling upon this subject, that in speaking of an idle anecdote, related by Smollet of Ben Jonson, he has this remark *: "Smollet knew less of Jonson than even Mr. Malone; he knew enough, however, of the publick to be convinced that in calumniating him, he was on the right side." I admit that this great poet has been wrongfully treated; I lament that Mr. Malone was led by others into an injurious estimation of his character; but when Mr. Gifford proceeds to accuse my friend of wilful misrepresentation, I must show, as I think satisfactorily, that the charge is destitute of proof.

A note written by Mr. Steevens, which was originally appended to Jonson's Commendatory Verses on Shakspeare, but which in the present edition is placed in juxtaposition to the Essay in its confutation, had been referred to by Mr. Malone in a note on Mr. Rowe's Life of the Poet. The following is the remark of Mr. Gifford:

"See also (he says) Mr. Steevens's *note* on those verses. —With pain I have *seen* it; and with disgust will the reader learn, that this 'note of Mr. Steevens' is neither more nor less than the identical letter of Macklin's which Mr. Malone himself had previously employed nearly thirty pages in proving to be a forgery from end to end! The exposure occurs in the first volume, the 'note' at the end of the second; so that Mr. Malone intrepidly hurries past his own refutation in quest of a known falsehood to bolster up a recorded lie.†"

* Gifford's Jonson, vol. viii. p. 453.

† The same, vol. i. p. ccliii.

These are hard words : and Mr. Gifford, I am confident, will regret his having used them, when he shall find that he is altogether mistaken in the fact. He has informed us that all his quotations are taken from the edition in 1793, and this, for purposes of general reference, might have been amply sufficient ; but when such language is applied to a note of Mr. Malone's, founded, in a great measure, on the place which it occupies, it might have been wished that Mr. Gifford had cast his eye upon the only edition for which Mr. Malone can be considered as responsible, his own in 1790. He would have there found Mr. Steevens's note, vol. i. p. 202 ; and in the same volume, one hundred and eighty pages afterwards, he would have seen Mr. Malone's refutation. But this is by no means the only instance in which Mr. Malone has been judged by the acts of another.

In speaking of *The Winter's Tale*, Mr. Gifford remarks, that Mr. Malone's " text and his notes confound each other." They certainly do so, if we are satisfied to take them as they are exhibited by Mr. Steevens. But how stands the fact ? Mr. Malone, in his *Essay on the Chronological Order of Shakspeare's Plays*, had ascribed *The Winter's Tale* to the year 1604 ; but having afterwards procured an inspection of Sir Henry Herbert's office book, he discovered that he had been in an error before his work had finally issued from the press, and pointed it out in his *Emendations*. The first and erroneous statement Mr. Steevens retained as the text, and then converted the subsequent correction into a note to the very passage which it was designed to overthrow ; and thus, by the gross negligence, if ignorantly done, or if otherwise, by the petty trick of a rival editor, Mr. Malone is exposed to the charge of having written nonsense. Another remark by Mr. Gifford arises from his inattention to dates. He commences with an extract from Mr. Malone.

" ' The Comedy of Humours, played eleven times between 25th Nov. 1596 and 11th Maye, 1597.'—' Perhaps,

says Mr. Malone, (on this extract from Henslowe's memorandum-book,) ' Every Man in his Humour. It will appear that Ben Jonson had money dealings with Mr. Henslowe, the manager of this theatre, (the Rose,) and that he wrote for him. The play might *afterwards* have been purchased *from this company* by the Lord Chamberlain's servants, (Shakspeare, Burbage, Heminge, Condell, &c.) by whom it was acted in 1598.' *Shak.* vol. ii. p. 457.

" Would the reader believe, on any authority but the writer's own, that the Mr. Malone, who drew up this plain paragraph, could be the same Mr. Malone who, not merely in one, or two, but in a hundred places, has grossly reviled Jonson on the score of *ingratitude* to Shakspeare for *introducing* him to the stage, and bringing out this very play!"

There can be no difficulty in believing it to be the same Mr. Malone who drew up this paragraph, when he had acquired information of which he was not possessed before. He introduces his extracts from the Henslowe MSS. with these words:—" *Just as this work was issuing from the press*, some curious manuscripts, relative to the stage, were found at Dulwich College, and obligingly transmitted to me from thence." It is evident that these papers could not, without the gift of prophecy, have enabled Mr. Malone to correct what appeared in an early part of his work, if they did not meet his eye till the conclusion. I may add, that their discovery and polite transmission to the historian of the stage, will add little support to Mr. Gifford's terms of " sloth and ignorance," so harshly applied to the members of that institution. The censures which are passed on Mr. Malone upon slighter matters, will not require me to detain the reader long.

" Mr. Malone had previously employed several pages (vol. i. pp. 611-15,) in proving Twelfth Night to be written in 1614, that is, sixteen years before the appearance of Every Man out of his Humour; he had also positively affirmed (p. cclxxv) that he '*did not believe*

Twelfth Night was meant ;' yet he subjoins to the note of Steevens, (who knew that he had been delivering a falsehood,) ' If the foregoing passage *was* levelled at Twelfth Night, my speculation falls to the ground.' He has not the integrity to support his own facts, lest he should remove one absurd and wretched calumny from Jonson."

I am surprised that one so conversant with the press as Mr. Gifford should so certainly conclude, that what appears first when printed, must have been previously written. The reverse is most frequently the case, and the whole of a work is generally gone through before the composition of the prefatory matter ; but in the present instance there is no inconsistency ; he tells us that if Mr. Steevens is right, he himself must have been wrong ; he does not allow that he was wrong, nor give up his own opinion, but only abstains from giving a gentleman, with whom he was then living on terms of intimacy, a direct and blunt contradiction. My principal object is to defend my late friend's integrity ; but I will step out of that course for a moment, to say a word in favour of his logick.

" ' Antony Munday is *ridiculed* here by Ben Jonson ; but he might notwithstanding be *deservedly eminent* ; that *malignity* which endeavoured to *tear a wreath from the brow of Shakspeare*, would certainly not spare inferior writers.' p. 481. Mr. Malone is no great logician—but let that pass. The passage to which he refers was probably written before Jonson knew Shakspeare ; for it occurs in one of his earliest pieces. With respect to the *eminence* of Antony, it is somewhat scurvily treated by Decker, Chapman, and Middleton ; it is not therefore a necessary consequence that the wreath of Shakspeare was endangered by *this* ridicule."

Mr. Malone's argument seems to me sufficiently clear. It does not follow that Munday was not eminent, because he was ridiculed by Jonson. He who (not at that time, but any time) was capable of attacking Shakspeare, who was unquestionably eminent, would not have scrupled to treat inferior writers with the same injustice : not a word

is said of *this* ridicule endangering Shakspeare. Mr. Malone is sometimes accused of self-contradiction, where, I confess, I cannot discover it.

“ ‘It is *certain*’ (he is quoting Mr. Malone’s words) ‘that not long after the year 1500, (again referring to the Return from Parnassus!) a coldness arose between Shakspeare and him, which, however he may talk of his almost idolatrous affection, produced, *on his part*,’ (what is become of Shakspeare’s ‘ballad against Jonson?’) from that time, 1600, ‘to the death of Shakspeare, and for many years afterwards, much *clumsy sarcasm*, and many *malevolent* reflections.’” p. 481.

“The critic had already forgotten his unfortunate letter, p. cviii, in which he admits that ‘old Ben’s jealousy did not *fully* display itself till Shakspeare retired from the stage.”

Is it inconsistent to say that a man regarded another with jealousy for many years, but that his jealousy did not *fully* display itself till a certain period?

Mr. Gifford is often in the habit of quoting the commentators generally, without marking out any individual, as if they were a corporate body, or partners in a firm, responsible for the acts of each other; and as Mr. Malone’s name is more frequently mentioned than any other, he is apparently loaded with more than belongs to his share; while Mr. Tyrwhitt, Sir William Blackstone, and others, escape under an anonymous censure. As for instance—

“The prologue to Henry VIII. it seems, was written by our author ‘to *ridicule* Shakspeare;’ and the whole weight of the commentators’ fury is directed against him, and him alone—‘Jonson,’ says one of them, ‘in all probability maliciously stole this opportunity to throw in his *envious* and *spiteful invective* before the representation of his rival’s play.’ Henry VIII. p. 348. But what influence had Jonson at the Globe, of which Shakspeare or his ‘associates’ Heminge, Burbage, and Condell, were, at this time, the sole managers and proprietors? Who em-

ployed Jonson to write this prologue? Shakspeare's associates. Who spoke it? Shakspeare's associates. Who preserved it? Shakspeare's associates. Who, finally, gave it to the world? Shakspeare's associates!—the very men whom, as Mr. Malone has just observed, 'the muse of Shakspeare had supported, and whom his last Will shewed that he had not forgotten!' However great may be the obligations of Jonson to Shakspeare, (of which, I believe, the reader has here had a full account,) it will scarcely be denied that these men, who had so long profited by his wonderful talents, who were, at that very moment, profiting by them, were, at least, equally indebted to him.—Yet of their ingratitude not a word is said, not a hint is dropped, while the collected fury of Mr. Malone and his followers is levelled against a person who, at the worst, was only a simple agent, and wrought as they directed!

“ I have entered into these details merely to shew what inconsistencies it is necessary for those to swallow who put their faith in Mr. Malone—for, after all, the whole of this tedious story is an absolute fable. The Prologue was not written by Jonson, and the play was not written by Shakspeare. The Piece acted in 1613 was 'a *new play*, called *All Is Truth*,' constructed, indeed, on the history of Henry VIII, and, like that, full of shows; but giving probably a different view of some of the leading incidents of that monarch's life. Shakspeare's Henry VIII, as Mr. Malone affirms, was written in 1601; if it had been merely revived, the Prologue would have adverted to the circumstance: but it speaks of the play as one which *had not yet appeared*; it calls the attention of the audience to a *novelty*; it supposes, in every line, that they *were unacquainted with its plan*; and it finally tells them that, if they came to hear a bawdy play, a noise of targets, or to see a fellow in a fool's coat, they would be deceived. Could the audience expect any thing of this kind? or was it necessary to guard them against it, in a favourite

comedy, with which they had all been perfectly familiar for twelve years ?”

The commentator, who is first quoted, was Tom Davies; the person who first suggested that the piece performed in 1613 was Shakspeare's Henry VIII., was Mr. Tyrwhitt, and the prologue was ascribed to Jonson, by Dr. Johnson and Dr. Farmer. These distinguished persons can scarcely be termed Mr. Malone's *followers*. Mr. Gifford has referred to the prologue as furnishing proofs, that it was an entirely new play. I have read it attentively with this view, and discover no such intimations as he has pointed out; but I have attempted to show that no satire was directed against Shakspeare, whoever might have been the author *. Mr. Malone's name is introduced in a note, where words are ascribed to him which he never used, though they are put in an inverted comma—

“ ‘ But,’ says Mr. Malone, ‘ All Is Truth must be Shakspeare's Henry VIII., for the titles of many of his plays were changed in 1613; thus Henry IV. was called Hotspur; Much Ado About Nothing, Benedict and Beatrice,’ &c. What is this to the purpose? If other titles were given to those plays in familiar conversation, they were still named after the principal characters or the leading events, and no mistake was likely to arise; but who would have recognized Henry VIII. under the name of All Is Truth? Besides, it is expressly termed a *new play*. Could Sir Henry Wotton, and those who notice it, be so ignorant of Shakspeare, as to call one of his most popular dramas a *new play* after it had been familiarised to the stage so many years !”

Mr. Malone has nowhere said, that All Is Truth *must be* Shakspeare's Henry VIII. for the reason here given. He speaks with less confidence on the subject than Mr. Tyrwhitt; but mentions, indeed, that the titles of some of our author's plays were altered in that year.

* See vol. xix. p. 500.

“ Thus, Henry IV, &c.;” yet by no means produces it as the words which have been added would denote as a decided proof. “ But who (says Mr. Gifford) would have recognized Henry VIII. under the name of All Is Truth ?” If it had two names, not an uncommon circumstance, any one would have done so easily ; and we are expressly told in the continuation of Stowe, that Henry VIII. was the name of the play which was performed when the Globe theatre was burnt ; the same thing is stated in a MS. letter to Sir Thomas Puckering by Thomas Larkin ; and even Sir H. Wotton, who has given it the title of All is True, has described a scene in it exactly corresponding with Shakespeare’s drama*. Let us come to another charge :

“ Ben, however, did not trust to the praises of others. One of his admirers honestly confesses

————— ‘ He

Of whom I write this, has prevented me,
And boldly said so much in his own praise,
No other pen need any trophy raise.’ p. 13.

“ This *admirer*, whom Mr. Malone, when he next mentions him, calls ‘ Ben’s old antagonist,’ p. 640, is Owen Feltham.—But what shall be said of Mr. Malone ? A judicial blindness appears to have fallen upon him the instant that he approached Jonson. Deprive him of this plea, and no terms will be strong enough to describe the excess of his ignorance or his malice. The *praise* refers to our author’s works. It is in the composition of his Sejanus, Catiline, and other poems mentioned by Feltham, that he pronounces Jonson to have said so much in his own praise as to make the applause of his friends superfluous : and the critic expressly contrasts his conduct, in this respect, with that of the ‘ trivial poets, whose chatterings live and fall at once.’ ”

Mr. Malone has spoken of Feltham as Jonson’s admirer, and also as his old antagonist ; because at different

* See Mr. Tyrwhitt’s note, vol. xix. p. 306.

times he was both: in his verses in Jonsonus Virbius, he was the one, in his parody on "Come leave the loathed stage," he had been the other. I know not why Mr. Malone's interpretation of these lines should be attributed to judicial blindness. That Jonson was in the habit of saying much in his own praise, will not, I think, be denied, and if the adverb *boldly* is more applicable to the words taken in this sense, there will be neither malice nor ignorance in supposing that Feltham meant to say that his merits were such that only his own pen was fit to describe them. But not to fatigue the reader with entering into a discussion of all the passages in which Mr. Gifford has endeavoured to turn Mr. Malone into ridicule, I shall confine myself to one or two more, in which heavy imputations are laid upon my late friend. A letter from Mr. Malone to Mr. Whalley has been produced in answer to one from that gentleman, soliciting his assistance in his projected edition of Jonson; and wherever Mr. Malone's sentiments, at a subsequent period, are found to vary from those which that letter contains, this change of opinion is converted into a charge against him, and Mr. Gifford exclaims, "What! not honest either?" because he expresses some doubts as to what he had said eleven years before in the hurry of a private correspondence. Mr. Rowe has recorded an anecdote of the venerable John Hales of Eton; and Mr. Malone having found other versions of the same story, has laid them before the reader, as was his usual practice. By this mode we are enabled to compare statements, elicit what appears most agreeable to truth, and, perhaps, may be furnished with materials to shake the credit of the narrative altogether, and this Mr. Gifford thinks he has effected on the present occasion. He ridicules, and with justice, the story, as it was told by Gildon in one of his letters, but none of his arguments tend to impeach it as related by Rowe; yet as a charge is implied against Mr. Malone for having retained in a note what Mr. Rowe had struck out in his first edition, I must refer the reader to

p. 445 of this volume, where he will find the reason assigned. I may add that as the story was altered by Rowe, it exhibited Jonson's hostility in a stronger light. If Hales defended Shakspeare against Jonson, who was present, we might infer from these expressions, that he had called his merits generally in question; but, as it is originally told, he confined his charge to a want of classical knowledge, which was true, and which naturally introduces Hales's answer. But let us see on what grounds Mr. Gifford supposes the story to be utterly incredible.

“A tissue of mere dotage scarcely deserves unravelling; but it may be just observed that when Jonson was seized with his last illness, (after which he certainly never went ‘to Mr. Hales’s chamber, at Eton’ or elsewhere,) the two grave judges, Suckling and Falkland, who sat on the merits of all the Greek and Roman poets, and decided with such convincing effect, were, the first in the 12th, and the second in the 15th year of their ages!”

How does this appear? Rowe has given neither date nor place to his anecdote; Jonson, not many years before his death, was still fond of society. Suckling, at the time of that event, was twenty-four, and Lord Falkland was well acquainted with Jonson, and had enjoyed his conversation at the Dog*. Mr. Gifford expresses a doubt whether there is any authority for the assertion, that Suckling was a professed admirer of Shakspeare, except Sir John’s Session of the Poets. “To censure Jonson with good-humoured wit for an unlucky play, is sufficient, in the eyes of the criticks, to set him down as an admirer of Shakspeare.” Yet Dryden expressly tells us, that he maintained Shakspeare’s superiority; and in one of his letters he speaks of “my friend, Shakspeare,” which, as he certainly could not have personally known him, was a colloquial mode of speaking of a favourite author. If the criticks had no other ground for their opinion

* Gifford’s Jonson, vol. ix. p. 4.

than what Mr. Gifford has supposed, their foundation was rotten indeed: for in Suckling's Session of the Poets, there is not one syllable about an unlucky play. I now come to a most direct accusation against Mr. Malone, conveyed in the most unmeasured terms—" ' Ben Jonson probably meant to sneer at the Tempest in the prologue to Every Man in his Humour—' our tempestuous drum; ' and he has endeavoured to depreciate this beautiful comedy by calling it a foolery. For some remarks on this *audacious falsehood*, see vol. iv. p. 371." Mr. Gifford has said, upon another occasion, " To this *atrocious* charge, there is but one answer which occurs to me; and though that be usually wrapt up in the courtesy of a learned language, I shall not make use of it." I shall not pretend to guess at the phrase which, even in its most courteous garb, Mr. Gifford's delicacy prevented him from using; yet I cannot but question, if the whole armamentarium of Gaspar Sciopius himself could have furnished him with stronger terms than here and elsewhere he has applied to Mr. Malone, in plain home-spun English. But let us turn to vol. iv. p. 371, and see these threatened remarks. They are on a passage in the Induction to Bartholomew Fair. " If there be never a servant-monster in the fair, who can help it," he says, " nor a nest of antiques? he is loth to make nature afraid in his plays, like those that beget tales, tempests, and such like drolleries " Upon this Mr. Gifford observes,

" As this passage has furnished such abundant matter for obloquy, it may not be amiss to examine it at large. Steevens, who is inclined to be complimentary, says that the Tempest was not secure from the criticism of our poet, (he had just charged him with having *unsparingly* censured it) ' whose *malice* appears to be more than equal to his wit. He says, if there be never a servant-monster in the fair, who can help it.' And Malone affirms that ' Jonson endeavours to depreciate this beautiful comedy by calling it a *foolery*.' The depreciation remains to be proved—but (I regret to say it) I have a heavier charge against Mr.

Malone than a too precipitate conclusion—a charge of misrepresentation. *Foolery*, cannot indeed be applied to any work without an intent to depreciate it: but this was not Jonson's word, nor was it even in his contemplation. The term used by him is *drollery*, which had a precise and specific bearing upon the whole subject of his Induction. A *droll*, or *drollery*, was the appropriate term for a puppet-show, and is so applied by all the writers of his time. Thus Claudia, in the Tragedy of Valentinian, declares that 'She had rather make a *drollery* till thirty,' i. e. spend her youth in making puppet-shows, which she considers as the lowest scene of degradation: and so, indeed, in many other places. The term continued in use down to the last century, for Dennis says, in one of his letters, that 'he went to see the Siege of Namur, a *droll*, at Bartholomew Fair.' Subsequently to Jonson's time, the word was applied to a farcical dialogue in a single scene: but there is, I confidently believe, no instance of a *drollery* being used for a legitimate comedy. The reader now sees all the advantage derived by Mr. Malone from his sophistication: had he adhered to Jonson's own language, this part of the charge against him could not have been sustained for a moment. I now return to Steevens. 'Servant-monster' is undoubtedly to be found in the *Tempest*; but I am yet to learn that the expression was the invention of Shakspeare, or even peculiar to him; though he has applied it with inimitable humour. The reader is not to learn that the town in those days abounded with exhibitions of what were familiarly called *monsters*, i. e. creatures of various kinds which were taught a thousand antic tricks; the constant concomitants of puppet-shows. 'I would not have you,' says Machin, 'step into the suburbs, and acquaint yourself either with *monsters*, or *motions*.' (*Dumb Night*.) And Jonson himself, in a subsequent part of this play, makes Bristle tax Haggise with loitering behind 'to see the *man with the monsters*.' Elephants, camels, bears, horses, &c. were all accompanied

by apes, who amused the spectator by assuming a command over them. Nor is the custom, nor the language, yet obsolete. I have frequently seen, at a country fair, a dog or bear called out to ‘show his obedience to his *master*,’ an ape, or monkey, that mounted, and drove him about at will. This was the servant-monster of Jonson’s age; but there was yet another, the clown who conducted the mummery of such characters as the machinery of the show required, beasts and fishes of the most uncouth and monstrous forms. The frequency and popularity of these exhibitions are excellently noted by Mr. Gilchrist, and it is impossible to look at the part of Trinculo, without seeing that it bears an immediate reference to this custom; and we may form some idea of the roar of the old theatre, at hearing him and his associate unwittingly characterise themselves as *monsters*, by adopting the well-known expression.”

Opere in longo fas est obrepere somnum. Mr. Malone’s work was a long one; and his researches, which have thrown a light upon English literature, by which almost every succeeding writer has profited, and to which Mr. Gifford will confess his obligations, were various, and extensive in no common degree. If in the midst of these labours, by the casual failure of a memory not remarkably retentive, he has, in the haste of writing, substituted one word for another, are we at once to set this down as an instance of wilful misrepresentation? If a lapse of this kind is to be so heavily visited, “who shall escape whipping?” Not even Mr. Gifford. In the fifth volume of his edition of Ben Jonson, p. 254, Mr. Gifford has the following remark:—“It appears from the elegant rules drawn up by Jonson, for the regulation of his club, that women of character were not excluded from attending the meetings.

‘Probæ fœminæ non repudianor’”—

I am far from wishing to insinuate that these fair ladies

had not a rightful claim to the epithet for which they are indebted to Mr. Gifford; but it was not bestowed upon them by Jonson. His words are—‘*Lectæ fœminæ non repudiantor,*’ and, without calling into question their probity, it would seem, by the mention of ‘tempting beauties,’ in the verses quoted by Mr. Gifford, from Shakerly Marmion, “an enthusiastick admirer of Jonson,” descriptive of these symposia, that some part of the company were at least drawn thither by “metal more attractive.” Let it not be supposed for a moment, that I accuse Mr. Gifford of a wilful misquotation, or a wish to deceive. I know him to be as incapable of such meanness as even Mr. Malone, and I cannot express myself more strongly; but I have only pointed out this trivial error, with a view of showing that a verbal inaccuracy is a very distinct offence from an audacious falsehood. An hypothesis, indeed, has been started by Mr. Gifford, from the specifick meaning of the word *drollery*, by which he thinks the possibility of an allusion to Shakspeare is entirely removed; and had this interpretation of the passage been suggested, before it was quoted by Mr. Malone, there might, perhaps, have been some ground for suspecting that he had changed the term for the purpose of eluding the argument; but this was not the case; and impressed, as he was, with the notion that the *Tempest* was the object of satire, it was of very little consequence whether this beautiful drama was called a foolery or classed with a puppet-show. After all, I am compelled to say, that, without adopting the notion of a permanent hostility between those two illustrious contemporaries, I have seen nothing to convince me that Jonson, in a moment of spleen, to which we are all more or less subject, had not Shakspeare in view. The words *servant monster* seem so directly to point at Calaban, who is repeatedly called by that name, and so many gratuitous suppositions are required to support the other hypothesis, that I am afraid there is nearly as little reason to doubt that the *Tempest* was here alluded to, as

that a passage in Julius Cæsar (which Mr. Gifford admits) was twice exposed to his censure, in the Induction to the Staple of News, and his Discoveries. Jonson was not unfrequently in the habit of asserting his pre-eminence, as first having taught rules to the stage; and it surely would have been but a tame mode of expressing his own superior taste and correctness, if he had merely said that his scenes were more according to truth and nature than those which a puppet-show would furnish. One charge more I must advert to, and I have done. Mr. Malone, after producing the well known passage from the Return to Parnassus, which has generally been supposed to allude to some literary contest between Jonson and Shakspeare; but which I shall not stop to examine; proceeds to add the authority of Fuller in his Worthies, which is thus noticed by Mr. Gifford—

“ I will give Fuller’s words. ‘ Many were the wit-combates between Shakspeare and Ben Jonson. I behold them like a Spanish great galleon, and an English man of war. Master Jonson, like the former, was built far higher in learning, solid but slow in his performances, Shakspeare, like the latter, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds by the quickness of his wit and invention.’ *Fuller*, vol. ii. p. 415.

“ These ‘ wit-combates ’ then (on which Mr. Malone founds a charge of hostility,) turn out after all to be those sprightly repartees which so delighted their common friends.—The solid attacks of Jonson repelled by the quick and lively sallies of Shakspeare (great masters, as both were, of conversation,) must, indeed, have been a mental treat of the highest kind, and could have given to no one, but the commentator, an idea of malice or ill-will on either side. There is nothing visible to ordinary eyes, but the fulness of friendship, enlivened by a social meeting, and tending to hilarity and festive delight. Yet this is produced to prove Jonson’s *enmity* ! What idea

of friendship Mr. Malone had formed, I know not; but it seems as if he thought that the conversation of all but deadly foes must, like trade-winds, *tend all one way*. Our author had other notions of friendship, and, I believe, correcter ones: he says,

‘ It is an act of tyranny, not love,
In practised friendship, wholly to approve.’

“ Again :

‘ Little know they that profess amity,
And seek to scant her *comely liberty*,
How much they lame her in her property.’
Vol. viii. 402.”

The words of Fuller are susceptible of two meanings. They may mean either literary contests, or sallies of wit in conversation; and I am satisfied that Mr. Gifford has explained them truly; but is Mr. Malone, who adopted one interpretation, to be censured as if he had understood these words in the other sense? Mr. Gifford knows not Mr. Malone’s notions of friendship. I regret that he did not know him better; for he was truly “ a man to be loved.” I regret still more deeply that the grave has closed over a long catalogue of illustrious men, whose esteem and regard accompanied him through life, and that my feeble voice must offer that testimony to his notions of friendship, which would have been borne with affectionate warmth, by a Reynolds, a Burke, and a Windham. He was, indeed, a cordial and a steady friend, combining the utmost mildness with the simplest sincerity, and the most manly independence. Tenacious, perhaps, of his own opinions, which he had seldom hastily formed, he was always ready to listen with candour and good humour to those of others; that suppleness of character which would yield without conviction, and that roughness of temper, which cannot tolerate dissent, were equally foreign from his nature: *Requiescat in pace*.

I may perhaps be permitted, lest my own sentiments should be misunderstood, to state, in a few words, my opinion of Jonson. I regard him with veneration, not only for his great powers, but for that intellectual dignity which, amidst a life of poverty and hardship, in spite of the scanty prospects of his early life, and the difficulties which afterwards beset him, did not suffer them to check him in the ardent pursuit of knowledge, or prevent him from being the first scholar of his age. To no one could the charge of malignity be worse applied. He appears to have been an open, warm-hearted man; but with a hot and haughty temper. The numerous quarrels in which he was engaged, in all of which it would be too great a stretch of candour to suppose him to have been invariably in the right, but which seldom appear to have lasted long, show him to have "carried anger as a flint bears fire." His energy of expression, whether in praise or censure, frequently exposed him to resentment in the latter case, while the warmth with which, in his happier moments, he speaks of contemporary genius, evinces the liberality and generosity of his mind. His remarks upon contemporary authors, as we find them recorded by Drummond, whose veracity has never been called in question, whatever his motives may have been, are certainly couched in terms of contemptuous asperity; and if such was his usual mode of passing judgment upon others, we cannot be surprised if it should have created offence; and this explains what is said by Davies of Hereford:

" — Some say thy soul

" Envy doth ulcer: yet corrupted hearts

" Such censurers may have."

This certainly does not prove that Davies thought him envious; but the very reverse: yet such an opinion must have been pretty generally prevalent before any allusion could be made to such a topick in a copy of commendation.

tory verses. I am willing to say a few words in exculpation of my accomplished countryman Drummond, who has been exposed to very severe censure, on account of what he has left us concerning Jonson. His memoranda were evidently never intended for the press, from the careless manner in which they are written, in point of style, while his compositions intended for the publick eye are marked by the highest degree of polish and limæ labor. His letters, which have been quoted by Mr. Gifford, exhibit his deliberate opinions respecting Jonson, while the strictures upon his character, in these loose notes, were probably penned in a moment of irritation, to which he appears to have been subject. If, indeed, the received notion of Jonson's heat of temper had any foundation, we may suppose him and his northern landlord to have been occasionally as "rheumatick as two dry toasts," from the description given of the latter by Nicholas Whiting :

"Drayton on's brains a new moon calfe was getting,

"*And testie Drummond could not speak for fretting.*"

His remark, that Jonson was for any religion, as being versed in both, has, I think, been misunderstood. It does not, I apprehend, mean that he was of no religion, but that having been led to consider the controversy deeply, he was acquainted with the arguments on both sides, and might sometimes, like his great namesake, be inclined to talk for victory, by which he might puzzle Drummond, who was probably not a very skilful polemick. We are told, by Jonson himself, in his Discoveries, that when he lamented that Shakspeare had not more discreetly blotted his writings, this remark was ascribed to malevolence, by the players, from whom Dryden, who was connected with the stage during great part of his life, may probably have derived his notion of Jonson's hostility to our great poet. It is not at all incredible that they may occasionally, from their very different views of poetical excellence, have been thrown into collision with each other ; but I am convinced

that through the greater part of their lives, they were cordial friends. If any temporary estrangement had ever taken place, it sunk before the tomb of Shakspeare.

“Tune etiam moreris? ah! quid me linquis, Erasme,

“Ante meus quam sit conciliatus amor?

“Art thou too fallen? ere anger could subside,

“And love return, has great Erasmus died.”

Johnson's Rambler, No. 54.

His affectionate tribute to Shakspeare's memory, which proves itself to be sincere, by being exactly appropriate, does equal honour to the object of his praise, and his own good heart.

I now take leave of this part of my task, which I have undertaken with reluctance, and have executed with pain. If in any part of it I have been betrayed into undue warmth (of which I am unconscious), my subject, at least with Mr. Gifford, will plead my excuse. If there be any one passage in his own writings to which, more than any other, he can look back with unmingled delight, I will venture to point out his high, but not more high than merited, eulogium upon the present very excellent Dean of Westminster. Let him recall to his recollection the feelings with which that tribute was penned, and he will know what I also must feel in defending the character of one, whom I loved and honoured from my infancy—
MINE OWN AND MY FATHER'S FRIEND.

JAMES BOSWELL.

Temple,
May, 1821.

IT was not my intention to have given, on the present occasion, any sketch of Mr. Malone's life; but to have reserved myself for a future opportunity, when I could have done more justice to the subject. In compliance, however, with the recommendation of several of my friends, who were of opinion that something of that nature would be expected, I have ventured to reprint a slight tribute to his memory, which I drew up in the year 1814.

A BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR, &c.

EDMOND MALONE was descended from an Irish family of the highest antiquity*: and all his immediate predecessors were distinguished men. His grandfather, Richard Malone, while he was yet only a student at the Temple, was entrusted with a negotiation in Holland; and so successfully acquitted himself, that he was honoured and rewarded by King William for his services. Having been called to the Irish bar about 1700, he became one of the most eminent barristers that have ever appeared in that country. His professional fame has only been eclipsed by that of his eldest son, the still more celebrated Anthony Malone, whose superiority to him has not, however, been universally acknowledged. To any one, who is even slightly acquainted with the history of Ireland, it would be superfluous to point out the extraordinary qualities which adorned the character of Anthony Malone. As a lawyer, an orator, and an able and upright statesman, he was confessedly one of the most illustrious men of which his country can boast. If any testimony to his merits were required, it will be found in the following passage from the pen of Mr. Grattan: “ Mr. Malone was a

* This is not the place to enlarge upon Mr. Malone's family; but a detailed account of it is to be found in the 7th volume of Archdall's Peerage of Ireland, which, it is believed, was drawn up by Mr. Malone himself, and which contains a full and interesting delineation of his grandfather and uncle.

man of the finest intellect that any country ever produced. The three ablest men I have ever heard, were Mr. Pitt (the father), Mr. Murray, and Mr. Malone. For a popular assembly I would chuse Mr. Pitt; for a privy council, Murray; for twelve wise men, Malone. This was the opinion which Lord Sackville, the Secretary of [17]53, gave of Mr. Malone to a gentleman from whom I heard it.—“He is a great sea in a calm,” said Mr. Gerard Hamilton, another great judge of men and talents. “Aye,” it was replied, “but had you seen him when he was young, you would have said he was a great sea in a storm! and, like the sea, whether in calm or storm, he was a great production of nature.”

Edmond, the second son of Richard, and the father of the late Mr. Malone, was born on the 16th of April, 1704. He was called to the English bar in 1730, where he continued for ten years to practise; and, in 1740, removed to the Irish bar. After having sat in several parliaments, and gone through the usual gradations of professional rank, he was raised, in 1766, to the dignity of one of the Judges of the Court of Common Pleas in Ireland, an office which he filled till his death in 1774. He married, in 1736, Catherine, only daughter and heir of Benjamin Collier, Esq. of Ruckholts, in the county of Essex, by whom he had four sons, Richard, created Lord Sunderlin; Edmond, the subject of our present Memoir; Anthony, and Benjamin, who died in their infancy; and two daughters, Henrietta and Catherine.

Edmond Malone was born at his father's house in Dublin, on the 4th of October, 1741. He was educated at the school of Dr. Ford, in Molesworth-street; and went from thence, in the year 1756, to the University of Dublin; where he took the degree of Bachelor of Arts. Here his talents very early displayed themselves; and, to use the words of a most respectable gentleman, his contemporary, “He was distinguished by a successful competition for academical honours with several young men, who after-

wards became the ornaments of the Irish Senate and Bar." It appears that at his outset he had laid down to himself those rules of study to which he ever afterwards steadily adhered. His pursuits were various, but they were not desultory. He was anxious for general information, as far as it could be accurately obtained; but had no value for that superficial smattering which fills the world with brisk and empty talkers. When sitting down to the perusal of any work, either antient or modern, his attention was drawn to its chronology, the history and character of its author, the feelings and prejudices of the times in which he lived; and any other collateral information which might tend to illustrate his writings, or acquaint us with his probable views and cast of thinking. In later years he was more particularly engrossed by the literature of his own country; but the knowledge he had acquired in his youth had been too assiduously collected, and too firmly fixed in his mind, not to retain possession of his memory, and preserve that purity and elegance of taste which is rarely to be met with but in those who have early derived it from the models of classical antiquity. As a proof that his youthful studies had by no means been forgotten, those who were intimate with him can well recollect the delight he at all times expressed, at receiving the letters of Dr. Michael Kearney. The communications of that elegant scholar would have gratified him had the writer been a stranger; but it is unnecessary to point out how much his pleasure was enhanced when he found them in the correspondence of one of his earliest and most highly valued friends. He appears frequently, at this period, in common with some of his accomplished contemporaries, to have amused himself with slight poetical compositions; and on the marriage of their present Majesties contributed an Ode to the collection of congratulatory verses which issued on that event from the University of Dublin. In 1763 he became a student in the Inner Temple; and in 1767 was called to the Irish bar. It

might naturally have been expected, that the example of his distinguished relatives, *et pater Æneas et avunculus Hector*, would have stimulated him to pursue the same career in which they had been so honourably successful; and that he would have attained to the highest rank in a profession for which he was so admirably fitted by his natural acuteness and steady habits of application; and accordingly, at his first appearance in the Courts, he gave every promise of future eminence. But an independent fortune having soon after devolved upon him, he felt himself at liberty to retire from the bar, and devote his whole attention in future to those literary pursuits which have established his reputation as a critick, and entitled him to the gratitude of every English scholar. With a view to the superior opportunities for information and study, and the society which London affords, he soon after settled in that metropolis; and resided there with very little intermission, for the remainder of his life. Such society, indeed, as he met with there, must have been a perpetual feast of intellectual enjoyment, to one so well qualified to appreciate its value. It is no exaggeration to say that centuries may elapse before two such men as Burke and Johnson can be brought together; and how long may we look in vain for such a combination of various and splendid talent as was collected by the liberal and tasteful hospitality of Sir Joshua Reynolds, himself one of the brightest ornaments of the age in which he lived! Among the many eminent men with whom he became early acquainted, he was naturally drawn by the enthusiastic admiration which he felt for Shakspeare, and the attention which he had already paid to the elucidation of his works, into a particularly intimate intercourse with Mr. Steevens. The just views which he himself had formed, led him to recognise in the system of criticism and illustration which that gentleman *then* adopted, the only means by which a correct exhibition of our great Poet could be obtained. Mr. Steevens was gratified to find that one so well ac-

quainted with the subject entertained that high estimation of his labours which Mr. Malone expressed; and very soon discovered the advantage he might derive from the communications of a mind so richly stored. Mr. Malone was ready and liberal in imparting his knowledge, which, on the other part, was most gratefully received. In one of Mr. Steevens's letters, after acknowledging in the warmest terms the value of Mr. Malone's assistance, he adopts the language of their favourite, Shakspeare:

" Only I have left to say,
" More is thy due than more than all can pay."

Mr. Steevens having published a second edition of his Shakspeare, in 1778, Mr. Malone, in 1780, added two supplementary volumes, which contained some additional notes, Shakspeare's poems, and seven plays which have been ascribed to him. There appears up to this time to have been no interruption to their friendship; but, on the contrary, Mr. Steevens, having formed a design of relinquishing all future editorial labours, most liberally made a present to Mr. Malone of his valuable collection of old plays, declaring himself that he was now become "a dowager commentator." It is painful to think that this harmony should ever have been disturbed, or that any thing should have led a disagreement between two such men, who were so well qualified to co-operate for the benefit of the literary world. Mr. Malone, having continued his researches into all the topicks which might serve to illustrate our great Dramatist, discovered, that although much had been done, yet that much still remained for critical industry; and that a still more accurate collation of the early copies than had hitherto taken place, was necessary, before the author's text could be clearly and satisfactorily ascertained. His materials accumulated so fast, that he determined to appear before the world as an editor in form. From that moment he

seems to have been regarded with jealousy by the elder Commentator, who appears to have sought an opportunity for a rupture, which he soon afterwards found, or rather created. But it is necessary to go back for a moment, to point out another of Mr. Malone's productions. There are few events in literary history more extraordinary in all its circumstances, than the publication of the poems attributed to Rowley. Mr. Malone was firmly convinced that the whole was a fabrication by Chatterton; and, to support his opinion, published one of the earliest pamphlets which appeared in the course of this singular controversy. By exhibiting a series of specimens from early English writers, both prior and posterior to the period in which this supposed Poet was represented to have lived, he proved that his style bore no resemblance to genuine antiquity; and by stripping Rowley of his antique garb, which was easily done by the substitution of modern synonymous words in the places of those obsolete expressions which are sprinkled throughout these compositions, and at the same time intermingling some archæological phrases in the acknowledged productions of Chatterton, he clearly shewed that they were all of the same character, and equally bore evident marks of modern versification, and a modern structure of language. He was followed by Mr. Warton, and Mr. Tyrwhitt in his Second Appendix; and although a few straggling believers yet exist, the public mind is pretty well made up upon the subject. But to return to Shakspeare. While Mr. Malone was engaged in this work, he received from Mr. Steevens a request of a most extraordinary nature. In a third edition of Johnson and Steevens's Shakspeare, which had been published under the superintendence of Mr. Reed, in 1785, Mr. Malone had contributed some notes in which Mr. Steevens's opinions were occasionally controverted. These he was now desired to retain in his new edition, exactly as they stood before, in order that Mr. S. might answer them. Mr. Malone replied, that he could make

no such promise ; that he must feel himself at liberty to correct his observations, where they were erroneous ; to enlarge them, where they were defective ; and even to expunge them altogether, where, upon further consideration, he was convinced they were wrong : in short, he was bound to present his work to the publick as perfect as he could make it. But he added, that he was willing to transmit every note of that description in its last state to Mr. Steevens, before it went to press ; that he might answer it if he pleased ; and that Mr. Malone would even preclude himself from the privilege of replying. Mr. Steevens persisted in requiring that they should appear with all their imperfections on their head ; and on this being refused, declared that all communication on the subject of Shakspeare was at an end between them*. In November, 1790, Mr. Malone's edition at last appeared ; and was sought after and read with the greatest avidity. In estimating its excellence by a comparison with the labours of those who preceded him, it would be presumptuous to say any thing of those earlier commentators whose characters have been so admirably delineated by Johnson ; but of Johnson himself it may be said without disrespect, that although he brought to his task all that a powerful mind and general knowledge could supply, yet he had neither (as his own Preface informs us) the means, nor perhaps the industry, which were required for accurate and scrupulous collation, nor was he by any means minutely versed in those contemporary writings, from which alone we can satisfactorily ascertain the Poet's language or allusions. A few remarks will be sufficient to characterise two gentlemen, who, as Criticks, may be fairly classed together—Mr. Capell and Mr. Jennens. Mr. Capell, with little judgment and as little taste, was a man of considerable application. He had assiduously

* These particulars are collected from the correspondence which passed between them, which Mr. Malone preserved.

studied Shakspeare, and the writers of his age ; he had collated most of the earlier editions, though not with accuracy upon which we can safely rely ; and in many instances had set the example of adherence to the old copies, where they had been ignorantly or rashly altered by his predecessors. But he had no settled principles of criticism ; his text has been drawn together from various quarters, according to the dictates of his own caprice ; and if he has often discarded the corruptions of others, he has not unfrequently introduced new ones of his own. His notes afford us little information, when we have at last disentangled their meaning, which is a matter of no small difficulty, from the enigmatical obscurity of his language. Mr. Jennens undertook to enable every reader to become his own Critick, by furnishing him with all the varieties which the folios, the quartos, or the suggestions of Commentators could afford ; and the plan, had it been successfully pursued, would certainly have been of use ; but the total want of discrimination with which he collected the most obvious typographical errors from the most spurious copies, exposed him to the merciless ridicule of Steevens. Mr. Steevens was in many respects peculiarly qualified for the duties of an Editor. With great diligence, an extensive acquaintance with early English literature, and a remarkably retentive memory ; he was besides, as Mr. Gifford has justly observed, “ a wit and a scholar.” But his wit, and the sprightliness of his style, were too often employed to bewilder and mislead us. His consciousness of his own satirical powers made him much too fond of exercising them at the expence of truth and justice. He was infected to a lamentable degree with what has been termed the jealousy of authorship ; and while his approbation was readily bestowed upon those whose competition he thought he had no reason to dread, he was fretfully impatient of a brother near the throne : his clear understanding would generally have enabled him to discover what was right, but the spirit of contradiction

could at any time induce him to maintain what was wrong. It would be impossible, indeed, to explain how any one possessed of his taste and discernment, could have brought himself to advocate so many indefensible opinions, without entering into a long and ungracious history of the probable motives by which he was influenced. If Mr. Malone had not the pointed vivacity of Mr. Steevens's manner (although his style was remarkable for its elegance, perspicuity, and precision), yet he was equal in critical sagacity, and superior, even to his rival, in accurate knowledge and unwearied research; but he was still more honourably distinguished by his openness of character and inflexible adherence to truth, from which he never was withdrawn, either by a wish to support an hypothesis or to vex a rival. His text is beyond all comparison the most faithful that had yet been produced. The merit of his notes cannot well be exemplified by a partial selection; but whenever they are critically examined it will be found, that without seeking opportunities for self-display, he has more frequently caught the real meaning of his author than any of those with whom he had to contend. His *History of the Stage* has now been published upwards of twenty years, during which period the attention of literary men has been much more generally drawn to researches of this nature; but it is still the standard authority to which all refer, and the guide in all subsequent inquiries. The other essays which are comprehended in his work have retained an equally high rank in public estimation. It has sometimes been objected to Mr. Malone, that he is too minute and circumstantial in collateral details. To this, if he had not defended himself against this charge in the *Life of Shakspeare*, it might be sufficient to reply, that it would be difficult to produce an instance of any eminent antiquary whose enthusiasm for the pursuit in which he is engaged has not led him to direct his attention to many things which have little attraction for the majority of readers; but they who

are conversant in such studies need not be told how often these excursive inquiries have furnished us with a clue which would otherwise have been lost, to more direct and important information. But after all, may we not ask if there be not something harsh and ungenerous in the fastidious contempt with which such discussions are treated. If inanimate objects, however trifling in themselves, acquire a value from being associated with the recollection of those whom we love or reverence, is it not an equally natural, and surely a more amiable feeling, which prompts us to take a kindly interest in the memorials even of those humble players who were the friends and associates of our immortal bard, and were honoured with the regard and esteem of "their fellow Shakspeare." Notwithstanding the general applause with which Mr. Malone's edition was welcomed, it cannot be strictly said that it met with universal approbation. Mr. Ritson (of whose seeming malignity of temper it would be cruel to speak with harshness, as it is now well known that it proceeded from a disturbed state of mind, which terminated at last in the most deplorable calamity that can afflict human nature), appeared against it in an angry and surrilous pamphlet. The misrepresentations in this performance were so gross, and so easy of detection, though calculated to mislead a careless reader, that Mr. Malone thought it worth his while to point them out in a letter which he published, addressed to his friend Dr. Farmer. Poor Ritson, however, is not the only writer who has attempted to persuade the world that they have been mistaken in Mr. Malone's character as a critick. He has been assailed, not many years back, in a similar way indeed, but by a person of a very different description. A gentleman, high in the law, having unluckily persuaded himself that if a man is ambitious of being witty, nothing more is necessary than that he should cease to be grave, thought proper to descend from the Bench, and indulge himself in some unwieldy gambols, which he flattered himself were at Mr. Malone's expence. To this

hapless piece of pleasantry Mr. Malone made no reply. Mr. Horne Tooke, who, whatever were his talents as a grammarian, or his knowledge as an Anglo-Saxon, had by no means an extensive acquaintance with the literature of Shakspeare's age, has mentioned Mr. Malone and Dr. Johnson with equal contempt*, and immediately after

* The passage to which I have alluded is in *ETIEA PITEPOENTA*, vol. ii. p. 319; and will show into what absurdity a man of real talent may be drawn, when he is carried away by an hypothesis, or (which I rather believe to be the case in this instance), writes under the influence of spleen. "In the *Winter's Tale*, Act I. Sc. I. p. 273, we have,

‘Come (Sir Page)

Looke on me with your *WELKIN* eye.’

On which passage S. Johnson says, hardly as usual, ‘*Welkin* eye: blue eye; an eye of the same colour with the *welkin*, or sky.’ And this is accepted and repeated by Malone. I can only say that this Note is worthy of them both; and they of each other. *Welkin* is the present participle *Willigenð*, or *Wealcynð*, i. e. *volvens quod volvit* of the Anglo-Saxon verb *Willigan* *Wealcan*, *volvare revolvare*, which is equally applicable to an eye of any colour, to what revolves or rolls over our heads, and to the waves of the sea, *pealcynðe ea pealcenðe jæ*.” Had Mr. Tooke produced an instance from any one author, who wrote in *English*, of *welkin* having been used in the sense of rolling, or in any other than that of the sky, or been able to persuade us that Shakspeare was an Anglo-Saxon, there might have been some ground for his criticism, though no excuse for his petulance. Ingenious etymology is always amusing, and, where we are in the dark with regard to the meaning of a word, may sometimes furnish us with a clue to discover it; but to adhere to the primitive and obsolete signification of a term, when, in the course of those changes which every language undergoes, it has assumed another sense, which is known and established, is surely little better than idle pedantry. As well might we maintain that *hostis*, in the age of Augustus, meant only a stranger, because Cicero informs us that it was so used in the earlier ages of the

proceeds to sneer at Mr. Tyrwhitt. It may readily be supposed that Mr. Malone would not feel very acutely the satire which associated him with such companions. But, to counterbalance these puny or peevish hostilities, his work gained the highest testimonies of applause from all who were best qualified to judge upon the subject, and from men whose approbation any one would be proud to obtain. He has himself alluded with grateful satisfaction to the praises bestowed upon it by Sir Joshua Reynolds and Dr. Farmer. Dr. J. Warton, in a most friendly letter, which accompanied a curious volume of old English poetry which had belonged to his brother Thomas, and which he presented to Mr. Malone as the person for whom its former possessor felt the highest esteem and the most cordial regard, observes to him that his edition is "by far, very far, the best that had ever appeared." Professor Porson, who, as every one who knew him can testify, was by no means in the habit of bestowing hasty or thoughtless praise, declared to the Writer of this account, that he considered the Essay on the three parts of Henry the Sixth as one of the most convincing pieces of criticism that he had ever read. A letter which he received on this occasion from Mr. Burke will not only exhibit the high opinion which he entertained of Mr. Malone, but will be read with interest, as furnishing an additional instance of the powers which that great statesman could display even in a complimentary letter to a friend; and as shewing how every topick became generalized, when it fell under the contemplation of his truly philosophical mind. As it principally relates to Mr. Malone's

Republick; or, to take our examples from our own language, with as much propriety might we say that a man is a knave in proportion as he is poor (Vide ΕΠΙΕΛΗΤΕΡ. vol. ii. p. 425), or describe a beautiful young lady as being *uncouth*, because we have not the honour of her acquaintance, and she is therefore *unknown* to us.

History of the Stage, I have prefixed it to that Essay, vol. iii.

Having concluded his laborious work, he paid a visit to his friends in Ireland; but soon after returned to his usual occupations in London.

Amidst his own numerous and pressing avocations, he was not inattentive to the calls of friendship. In 1791 appeared Mr. Boswell's "Life of Dr. Johnson," a work in which Mr. Malone felt at all times a very lively interest, and gave every assistance to its author during its progress which it was in his power to bestow. His acquaintance with this gentleman commenced in 1785, when, happening accidentally at Mr. Baldwin's printing-house to be shown a sheet of the "Tour to the Hebrides," which contained Johnson's character, he was so much struck with the spirit and fidelity of the portrait, that he requested to be introduced to its writer. From this period a friendship took place between them, which ripened into the strictest and most cordial intimacy, and lasted without interruption as long as Mr. Boswell lived. After his death, in 1795, Mr. Malone continued to show every mark of affectionate attention towards his family; and in every successive edition of Johnson's Life took the most unwearied pains to render it as much as possible correct and perfect. He illustrated it with many notes of his own, and procured many valuable communications from his friends, among whom its readers will readily distinguish Mr. Bindley. Any account of Mr. Malone would be imperfect which omitted to mention his long intimacy with that gentleman, who was not so remarkable as the possessor of one of the most valuable libraries in this country, as he was for the accurate and extensive information which enabled him to use it, and the benevolent politeness with which he was always willing to impart his knowledge to others. There was no one whom Mr. Malone more cordially loved.

But Mr. Boswell was by no means the only person who

was under obligations to him of this nature: he paid a similar attention to the productions of Mr. Jephson the Poet, whom he admired for his genius, and to whom he at all times felt the strongest attachment. In addition to the assistance which his residence in London and his experience in all that related to the press enabled him to bestow; he wrote an Epilogue to the Count of Narbonne; a Prologue to *Julia, or the Italian Lover*; and furnished the concluding part of the Epilogue to the same Play, which had been left unfinished by Mr. Courtenay. How much he delighted in the society of that gentleman, whose name has thus occurred, may be readily conceived by all who had the happiness of his acquaintance, and who know how to value ready and unaffected wit in a companion, or genuine kindness of heart in a friend. It is unnecessary to multiply instances of his literary courtesy, yet it would be injustice to them both, not to mention the generous warmth with which Mr. Gifford has expressed himself in the introduction to his valuable edition of Massinger. Speaking of the early copies of that Poet which he had been able to procure, he observes, "Mr. Malone, with a liberality which I shall ever remember with gratitude and delight, furnished me, unsolicited, with the whole of his invaluable collection."

In 1796 he was again called forth to display his zeal in defence of Shakspeare, against the contemptible fabrications with which the Irelands endeavoured to delude the publick. Although this imposture, unlike the Rowleian poems, which were performances of extraordinary genius, exhibited about the same proportion of talent as it did of honesty, yet some persons of no small name were hastily led into a belief of its authenticity. Mr. Malone saw through the falsehood of the whole from its commencement; and laid bare the fraud, in a pamphlet, which was written in the form of a letter to his friend Lord Charlemont, a nobleman with whom he lived on the most intimate footing, and maintained a constant correspondence.

It has been thought by some that the labour which he bestowed upon this performance was more than commensurate with the importance of the subject ; and it is true that a slighter effort would have been sufficient to have overthrown this wretched forgery ; but we have reason to rejoice that Mr. Malone was led into a fuller discussion than was his intention at the outset ; we owe to it a work which, for acuteness of reasoning, and the curious and interesting view which it presents of English literature, will retain its value long after the trash which it was designed to expose shall have been consigned to oblivion. Mr. Steevens on this occasion forgot all his feelings of rivalry, and paid the following just and liberal compliment to Mr. Malone.

“ Mr. Steevens presents his best compliments to Mr. Malone, and most sincerely thanks him for his very elegant present, which exhibits one of the most decisive pieces of criticism that was ever produced.”

Mr. Burke having received a copy of this Essay from the author, again employed his matchless pen in the pleasing task of doing honour to the merits of his friend.

“ My dear Sir,

“ Your letter is dated the first of the month, but I did not receive it, with the welcome and most acceptable present that came along with it, till late in the evening of yesterday : however, I could not postpone the satisfaction offered to me by your partiality and goodness ; I got to the seventy-third page before I went to sleep, to which what I read did not greatly contribute. I do not know that for several years I longed so much for any literary object as for the appearance of this work. Far from having my expectations disappointed, I may say with great sincerity, that they have been infinitely exceeded. The spirit of that sort of criticism by which false pretence and imposture are detected, was grown very rare in this century ; you have revived it with great advantage.

Besides doing every thing which the vindication of the first genius perhaps in the world required, from the hand of him who studied him the most, and illustrated him the best, you have in the most natural, happy, and pleasing manner, and as if you were drawn into it by your subject, given us a very interesting History of our Language, during that important period in which, after being refined by Chaucer, it fell into the rudeness of civil confusion, and then continued in a pretty even progress to the state of correctness, strength, and elegance, in which we see it in your writings. Your note, in which for the first time you leave the character of the antiquary, to be, I am afraid, but too right in that of a prophet, has not escaped me. Johnson used to say, he loved a good hater. Your admiration of Shakspeare would be ill sorted indeed, if your taste (to talk of nothing else) did not lead you to a perfect abhorrence of the French Revolution, and all its works. Once more I thank you most heartily for the great entertainment you have given me as a Critick, as an Antiquary, as a Philologist, and as a Politician. I shall finish the book, I think, to-day. This will be delivered to you by a young kinsman of mine, of Exeter college in Oxford. I think him a promising young man, very well qualified to be an admirer of yours, and, I hope, to merit your notice, of which he is very ambitious. I have the honour to be, my dear Sir, with true respect and affection,

“ Your most faithful and very
much obliged and obedient servant,

“ EDM. BURKE.

“ Beaconsfield, April 8, 1796.”

Mr. Malone, in the year 1792, had the misfortune to lose his admirable friend Sir Joshua Reynolds, whose death has left a chasm in society which will not easily be supplied; and his executors, of whom Mr. Malone had the honour to be one, having determined in 1797 to give

the world a complete collection of his works, he superintended the publication, and prefixed to it a very pleasing biographical sketch of their author.

Although his attention was still principally directed to Shakspeare, and he was gradually accumulating a most valuable mass of materials for a new edition of that Poet, he found time to do justice to another. He drew together, from various sources, the Prose Works of Dryden, which, as some of them were originally appended to works which were little known, had never impressed the general reader with that opinion of their excellence which they deserved, and published them in 1800. The narrative which he prefixed is a most important accession to biography. By active inquiry, and industrious and acute research, he ascertained many particulars of that Poet's life and character, that had been supposed to be irrecoverably lost, and detected the falsehood of many a traditional tale that had been carelessly repeated by former writers. In 1808 he prepared for the press a few productions of his friend, the celebrated William Gerard Hamilton, with which he had been entrusted by his executors; and prefixed to this also a brief but elegant sketch of his life. In 1811 his country was deprived of Mr. Windham. Mr. Malone, who equally admired and loved him, drew up a short memorial of his amiable and illustrious friend, which originally appeared in the Gentleman's Magazine; and was afterwards, in an enlarged and corrected state, printed in a small pamphlet, and privately distributed. But, alas! the kind Biographer was too soon to want "the generous tear he paid." A gradual decay appears to have undermined his constitution; and when he was just on the point of going to the press with his new edition of Shakspeare, he was interrupted by an illness, which proved fatal; and, to the irreparable loss of all who knew him, he died on the 25th of May, 1812, in the 71st year of his age. In his last illness he was soothed by the tender and unremitting attentions of his brother, Lord Sun-

derlin, and his youngest sister; the eldest, from her own weak state of health, was debarred from this melancholy consolation. He left no directions about his funeral; but his brother, who was anxious, with affectionate solicitude, to execute every wish he had formed, having inferred from something that dropped from him, that it was his desire to be buried among his ancestors in Ireland, his remains were conveyed to that country, and interred at the family seat of Baronston, in the county of Westmeath.

Mr. Malone, in his person, was rather under the middle size. The urbanity of his temper, and the kindness of his disposition, were depicted in his mild and placid countenance. His manners were peculiarly engaging. Accustomed from his earliest years to the society of those who were distinguished for their rank or talent, he was at all times and in all companies easy, unembarrassed, and unassuming. It was impossible to meet him, even in the most casual intercourse, without recognizing the genuine and unaffected politeness of the gentleman born and bred. His conversation was in a high degree entertaining and instructive; his knowledge was various and accurate, and his mode of displaying it void of all vanity or pretension. Though he had little relish for noisy convivial merriment, his habits were social, and his cheerfulness uniform and unclouded. As a scholar, he was liberally communicative. Attached, from principle and conviction, to the Constitution of his Country in Church and State, which his intimate acquaintance with its history taught him how to value, he was a loyal subject, a sincere Christian, and a true son of the Church of England. His heart was warm, and his benevolence active. His charity was prompt, but judicious and discriminating; not of that indolent kind that is carried away by every idle or fictitious tale of distress, but anxious to ascertain the nature and source of real calamity, and indefatigable in his efforts to relieve it. His purse and his time were at all times ready to remove the sufferings, and promote the welfare

of others. As a friend he was warm and steady in his attachments; respect for the feelings of those whose hearts are still bleeding for his loss, prevents me from speaking of him as a brother. This short and imperfect tribute to his memory is paid by one who for years has enjoyed his society, and been honoured with his confidence; and whose affection and respect were hourly increased by a nearer contemplation of his virtues.

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P R E F A C E .

IT is not my design to enter into a criticism upon this author ; though to do it effectually, and not superficially, would be the best occasion that any just writer could take, to form the judgment and taste of our nation. For of all English poets Shakspeare must be confessed to be the fairest and fullest subject for criticism, and to afford the most numerous, as well as most conspicuous instances, both of beauties and faults of all sorts. But this far exceeds the bounds of a preface, the business of which is only to give an account of the fate of his works, and the disadvantages under which they have been transmitted to us. We shall hereby extenuate many faults which are his, and clear him from the imputation of many which are not : a design, which, though it can be no guide to future critics to do him justice in one way, will at least be sufficient to prevent their doing him an injustice in the other.

I cannot however but mention some of his principal and characteristick excellencies, for which (notwithstanding his defects) he is justly and universally elevated above all other dramattick writers. Not that this is the proper place of praising him, but because I would not omit any occasion of doing it.

If ever any author deserved the name of an *original*, it was Shakspeare. Homer himself drew not his art so immediately from the fountains of nature, it proceeded through Ægyptian strainers and channels, and came to him not without some tincture of the learning, or some cast of the models, of those before him. The poetry of Shakspeare was inspiration indeed : he is not so much an imitator as an instrument, of nature ; and it is not so just to say that he speaks from her, as that she speaks through him.

His *characters* are so much nature herself, that it is a sort of injury to call them by so distant a name as copies of her. Those of other poets have a constant resemblance, which shows that they received them from one another, and were but multipliers of the same image: each picture, like a mock-rainbow, is but the reflection of a reflection. But every single character in Shakspeare is as much an individual, as those in life itself: it is as impossible to find any two alike; and such as from their relation or affinity in any respect appear most to be twins, will, upon comparison, be found remarkably distinct. To this life and variety of character, we must add the wonderful preservation of it; which is such throughout his plays, that had all the speeches been printed without the very names of the persons, I believe one might have applied them with certainty to every speaker*.

The *power* over our *passions* was never possessed in a more eminent degree, or displayed in so different instances. Yet all along, there is seen no labour, no pains to raise them; no preparation to guide or guess to the effect, or be perceived to lead toward it: but the heart swells, and the tears burst out, just at the proper places: we are surprised the moment we weep; and yet upon reflection find the passion so just, that we should be surprised if we had not wept, and wept at that very moment.

How astonishing is it again, that the passions directly opposite to these, laughter and spleen, are no less at his command! that he is not more a master of the *great* than of the *ridiculous* in human nature; of our noblest tenderesses, than of our vainest foibles; of our strongest emotions, than of our idlest sensations!

Nor does he only excel in the passions: in the coolness of reflection and reasoning he is full as admirable. His *sentiments* are not only in general the most pertinent and judicious upon every subject; but by a talent very peculiar, something between penetration and felicity, he hits upon that particular point on which the bent of each argument turns, or the force of each motive depends. This is

* Addison, in the 273d Spectator, has delivered a similar opinion respecting Homer: "There is scarce a speech or action in the Iliad, which the reader may not ascribe to the person who speaks or acts, without seeing his name at the head of it."

perfectly amazing, from a man of no education or experience in those great and publick scenes of life which are usually the subject of his thoughts: so that he seems to have known the world by intuition, to have looked through human nature at one glance, and to be the only author that gives ground for a very new opinion, that the philosopher, and even the man of the world, may be *born*, as well as the poet.

It must be owned, that with all these great excellencies, he has almost as great defects; and that as he has certainly written better, so he has perhaps written worse, than any other. But I think I can in some measure account for these defects, from several causes and accidents; without which it is hard to imagine that so large and so enlightened a mind could ever have been susceptible of them. That all these contingencies should unite to his disadvantage seems to me almost as singularly unlucky, as that so many various (nay contrary) talents should meet in one man, was happy and extraordinary.

It must be allowed that stage-poetry, of all other, is more particularly levelled to please the *populace*, and its success more immediately depending upon the *common suffrage*. One cannot therefore wonder, if Shakspeare, having at his first appearance no other aim in his writings than to procure a subsistence, directed his endeavours solely to hit the taste and humour that then prevailed. The audience was generally composed of the meaner sort of people; and therefore the images of life were to be drawn from those of their own rank: accordingly we find, that not our author's only, but almost all the old comedies have their scene among *tradesmen* and *mechanicks*: and even their historical plays strictly follow the common *old stories* or *vulgar traditions* of that kind of people. In tragedy, nothing was so sure to *surprize* and cause *admiration*, as the most strange, unexpected, and consequently most unnatural, events and incidents; the most exaggerated thoughts; the most verbose and bombast expression; the most pompous rhymes, and thundering versification. In comedy, nothing was so sure to *please*, as mean buffoonery, vile ribaldry, and unmannerly jests of fools and clowns. Yet even in these our author's wit buoys up, and is borne above his subject: his genius in those low parts is like some prince of a romance in the disguise of a shepherd or

peasant ; a certain greatness and spirit now and then break out, which manifest his higher extraction and qualities.

It may be added, that not only the common audience had no notion of the rules of writing, but few even of the better sort piqued themselves upon any great degree of knowledge or nicety that way ; till Ben Jonson getting possession of the stage, brought critical learning into vogue : and that this was not done without difficulty, may appear from those frequent lessons (and indeed almost declamations) which he was forced to prefix to his first plays, and put into the mouth of his actors, the *grex*, *chorus*, &c. to remove the prejudices, and inform the judgment of his hearers. Till then, our authors had no thoughts of writing on the model of the ancients : their tragedies were only histories in dialogue ; and their comedies followed the thread of any novel as they found it, no less implicitly than if it had been true history.

To judge therefore of Shakspeare by Aristotle's rules, is like trying a man by the laws of one country, who acted under those of another. He writ to the *people* ; and writ at first without patronage from the better sort, and therefore without aims of pleasing them ; without assistance or advice from the learned, as without the advantage of education or acquaintance among them ; without that knowledge of the best models, the ancients, to inspire him with an emulation of them ; in a word, without any views of reputation, and of what poets are pleased to call immortality : some or all of which have encouraged the vanity, or animated the ambition, of other writers.

Yet it must be observed, that when his performances had merited the protection of his prince, and when the encouragement of the court had succeeded to that of the town ; the works of his riper years are manifestly raised above those of his former. The dates of his plays sufficiently evidence that his productions improved, in proportion to the respect he had for his auditors. And I make no doubt this observation will be found true in every instance, were but editions extant from which we might learn the exact time when every piece was composed, and whether writ for the town or the court.

Another cause (and no less strong than the former) may be deduced from our poet's being a *player*, and forming himself first upon the judgments of that body of men

whereof he was a member. They have ever had a standard to themselves, upon other principles than those of Aristotle. As they live by the majority, they know no rule but that of pleasing the present humour, and complying with the wit in fashion; a consideration which brings all their judgment to a short point. Players are just such judges of what is *right*, as tailors are of what is *graceful*. And in this view it will be but fair to allow, that most of our author's faults are less to be ascribed to his wrong judgment as a poet, than to his right judgment as a player.

By these men it would be thought a praise to Shakspeare, that he scarce ever *blotted a line*. This they industriously propagated, as appears from what we are told by Ben Jonson in his Discoveries, and from the preface of Heminge and Condell to the first folio edition. But in reality (however it has prevailed) there never was a more groundless report, or to the contrary of which there are more undeniable evidences. As, the comedy of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, which he entirely new writ; *The History of Henry the Sixth*, which was first published under the title of *The Contention of York and Lancaster*; and that of *Henry the Fifth*, extremely improved; that of *Hamlet* enlarged to almost as much again as at first, and many others. I believe the common opinion of his want of learning proceeded from no better ground. This too might be thought a praise by some, and to this his errors have as injudiciously been ascribed by others. For 'tis certain, were it true, it would concern but a small part of them; the most are such as are not properly defects, but superfoetations; and arise not from want of learning or reading, but from want of thinking or judging: or rather (to be more just to our author) from a compliance to those wants in others. As to a wrong choice of the subject, a wrong conduct of the incidents, false thoughts, forced expressions, &c. if these are not to be ascribed to the fore-said accidental reasons, they must be charged upon the poet himself, and there is no help for it. But I think the two disadvantages which I have mentioned (to be obliged to please the lowest of the people, and to keep the worst of company) if the consideration be extended as far as it reasonably may, will appear sufficient to mislead and depress the greatest genius upon earth. Nay, the more modesty with which such a one is endued, the more he is in

danger of submitting and conforming to others, against his own better judgment.

But as to his *want of learning*, it may be necessary to say something more; there is certainly a vast difference between *learning* and *languages*. How far he was ignorant of the latter, I cannot determine; but it is plain he had much reading at least, if they will not call it learning. Nor is it any great matter, if a man has knowledge, whether he has it from one language or from another. Nothing is more evident than that he had a taste of natural philosophy, mechanicks, ancient and modern history, poetical learning, and mythology: we find him very knowing in the customs, rites, and manners of antiquity. In Coriolanus and Julius Cæsar, not only the spirit, but manners, of the Romans are exactly drawn; and still a nicer distinction is shown between the manners of the Romans in the time of the former, and of the latter. His reading in the ancient historians is no less conspicuous, in many references to particular passages: and the speeches copied from Plutarch in Coriolanus* may, I think, as well be made an instance of his learning, as those copied from Cicero in Catiline of Ben Jonson's. The manners of other nations in general, the Egyptians, Venetians, French, &c. are drawn with equal propriety. Whatever object of nature, or branch of science, he either speaks of or describes, it is always with competent, if not extensive knowledge: his descriptions are still exact; all his metaphors appropriated, and remarkably drawn from the true nature and inherent qualities of each subject. When he treats of ethick or politick, we may constantly observe a wonderful justness of distinction, as well as extent of comprehension. No one is more a master of the political story, or has more frequent allusions to the various parts of it: Mr. Waller (who has been celebrated for this last particular) has not shown more learning this way than Shakspeare. We have translations from Ovid published in his name †, among those poems which pass for his, and

* These, as the reader will find in the notes on that play, Shakspeare drew from Sir Thomas North's translation, 1579.

MALONE.

† They were written by Thomas Heywood. See vol. xx. p. 395.

MALONE.

for some of which we have undoubted authority (being published by himself, and dedicated to his noble patron the Earl of Southampton): he appears also to have been conversant in Plautus, from whom he has taken the plot of one of his plays: he follows the Greek authors, and particularly Dares Phrygius, in another (although I will not pretend to say in what language he read them). The modern Italian writers of *novels* he was manifestly acquainted with; and we may conclude him to be no less conversant with the ancients of his own country, from the use he has made of Chaucer in *Troilus and Cressida*, and in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, if that play be his, as there goes a tradition it was (and indeed it has little resemblance of Fletcher, and more of our author than some of those which have been received as genuine).

I am inclined to think this opinion proceeded originally from the zeal of the partizans of our author and Ben Jonson; as they endeavoured to exalt the one at the expence of the other. It is ever the nature of parties to be in extremes; and nothing is so probable, as that because Ben Jonson had much the more learning, it was said on the one hand that Shakspeare had none at all; and because Shakspeare had much the most wit and fancy, it was retorted on the other, that Jonson wanted both. Because Shakspeare borrowed nothing, it was said that Ben Jonson borrowed every thing. Because Jonson did not write extempore, he was reproached with being a year about every piece; and because Shakspeare wrote with ease and rapidity, they cried, he never once made a blot. Nay, the spirit of opposition ran so high, that whatever those of the one side objected to the other, was taken at the rebound, and turned into praises; as injudiciously, as their antagonists before had made them objections.

Poets are always afraid of envy; but sure they have as much reason to be afraid of admiration. They are the Scylla and Charybdis of authors; those who escape one, often fall by the other. *Pessimus genus inimicorum laudantes*, says Tacitus; and Virgil desires to wear a charm against those who praise a poet without rule or reason

“ — si ultra placitum laudârit, baccare frontem

“ Cingite, ne vati noceat——.”

But however this contention might be carried on by the partizans on either side, I cannot help thinking these two

great poets were good friends, and lived on amicable terms, and in offices of society with each other. It is an acknowledged fact, that Ben Jonson was introduced upon the stage, and his first works encouraged by Shakspeare. And after his death, that author writes, *To the memory of his beloved William Shakspeare*, which shows as if the friendship had continued through life. I cannot for my own part find any thing *invidious* or *sparing* in those verses, but wonder Mr. Dryden was of that opinion. He exalts him not only above all his contemporaries, but above Chaucer and Spenser, whom he will not allow to be great enough to be ranked with him; and challenges the names of Sophocles, Euripides, and Æschylus, nay, all Greece and Rome at once, to equal him: and (which is very particular) expressly vindicates him from the imputation of wanting *art*, not enduring that all his excellencies should be attributed to *nature*. It is remarkable too, that the praise he gives him in his Discoveries seems to proceed from a *personal kindness*; he tells us, that he loved the man, as well as honoured his memory; celebrates the honesty, openness, and frankness of his temper; and only distinguishes, as he reasonably ought, between the real merit of the author, and the silly and derogatory applauses of the players. Ben Jonson might indeed be sparing in his commendations (though certainly he is not so in this instance) partly from his own nature, and partly from judgment. For men of judgment think they do any man more service in praising him justly, than lavishly. I say, I would fain believe they were friends, though the violence and ill breeding of their followers and flatterers were enough to give rise to the contrary report. I hope that it may be with *parties*, both in wit and state, as with those monsters described by the poets; and that their *heads* at least may have something human, though their *bodies* and *tails* are wild beasts and serpents.

As I believe that what I have mentioned gave rise to the opinion of Shakspeare's want of learning; so what has continued it down to us may have been the many blunders and illiteracies of the first publishers of his works. In these editions their ignorance shines in almost every page; nothing is more common than *Actus tertia*, *Exit omnes*, *Enter three Witches solus* *. Their French is as bad

5 *Enter three Witches solus.*] This blunder appears to be of

as their Latin, both in construction and spelling: their very Welsh is false. Nothing is more likely than that those palpable blunders of Hector's quoting Aristotle, with others of that gross kind, sprung from the same root: it not being at all credible that these could be the errors of any man who had the least tincture of a school, or the least conversation with such as had. Ben Jonson (whom they will not think partial to him) allows him at least to have had *some* Latin; which is utterly inconsistent with mistakes like these. Nay, the constant blunders in proper names of persons and places, are such as must have proceeded from a man, who had not so much as read any history in any language: so could not be Shakspeare's.

I shall now lay before the reader some of those almost innumerable errors, which have risen from one source, the ignorance of the players, both as his actors, and as his editors. When the nature and kinds of these are enumerated and considered, I dare to say that not Shakspeare only, but Aristotle or Cicero, had their works undergone the same fate, might have appeared to want sense as well as learning.

It is not certain that any one of his plays was published by himself. During the time of his employment in the theatre, several of his pieces were printed separately in quarto. What makes me think that most of these were not published by him, is the excessive carelessness of the press: every page is so scandalously false spelled, and almost all the learned and unusual words so intolerably mangled, that it is plain there either was no corrector to the press at all, or one totally illiterate. If any were supervised by himself, I should fancy *The Two Parts of Henry the Fourth*, and *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, might have been so: because I find no other printed with any exactness; and (contrary to the rest) there is very little variation in all the subsequent editions of them. There are extant two prefaces to the first quarto edition of *Troilus and Cressida* in 1609, and to that of *Othello*; by which it appears, that the first was published without his knowledge or consent, and even before it was acted, so

Mr. Pope's own invention. It is not to be found in any one of the four folio copies of *Macbeth*, and there is no quarto edition of it extant. STEEVENS.

late as seven or eight years before he died : and that the latter was not printed till after his death. The whole number of genuine plays, which we have been able to find printed in his life-time, amounts but to eleven. And of some of these, we meet with two or more editions by different printers, each of which has whole heaps of trash different from the other : which I should fancy was occasioned by their being taken from different copies belonging to different playhouses.

The folio edition (in which all the plays we now receive as his were first collected) was published by two players, Heminge and Condell, in 1623, seven years after his decease. They declare, that all the other editions were stolen and surreptitious, and affirm theirs to be purged from the errors of the former. This is true as to the literal errors, and no other ; for in all respects else it is far worse than the quartos.

First, because the additions of trifling and bombast passages are in this edition far more numerous. For whatever had been added, since those quartos, by the actors, or had stolen from their mouths into the written parts, were from thence conveyed into the printed text, and all stand charged upon the author. He himself complained of this usage in *Hamlet*, where he wishes that *those who play the clowns would speak no more than is set down for them*. (Act III. Sc. II.) But as a proof that he could not escape it, in the old editions of *Romeo and Juliet* there is no hint of a great number of the mean conceits and ribaldries now to be found there. In others, the low scenes of mobs, plebeians, and clowns, are vastly shorter than at present : and I have seen one in particular (which seems to have belonged to the play-house, by having the parts divided with lines, and the actor's names in the margin) where several of those very passages were added in a written hand, which are since to be found in the folio.

In the next place, a number of beautiful passages, which are extant in the first single editions, are omitted in this : as it seems, without any other reason, than their willingness to shorten some scenes : these men (as it was said of Procrustes) either lopping, or stretching an author, to make him just fit for their stage.

This edition is said to be printed from the *original copies* ; I believe they meant those which had lain ever since the author's days in the play-house, and had from

time to time been cut, or added to, arbitrarily. It appears that this edition, as well as the quartos, was printed (at least partly) from no better copies than the *prompter's book*, or *piece-meal parts* written out for the use of the actors: for in some places their very * names are through carelessness set down instead of the *Personæ Dramatis*; and in others the notes of direction to the *property-men* for their *moveables*, and to the *players* for their *entries*, are inserted into the text † through the ignorance of the transcribers.

The plays not having been before so much as distinguished by Acts and Scenes, they are in this edition divided according as they played them; often when there is no pause in the action, or where they thought fit to make a breach in it, for the sake of musick, masques, or monsters.

Sometimes the scenes are transposed and shuffled backward and forward; a thing which could no otherwise happen, but by their being taken from separate and piece-meal written parts.

Many verses are omitted entirely, and others transposed; from whence invincible obscurities have arisen, past the guess of any commentator to clear up, but just where the accidental glimpse of an old edition enlightens us.

Some characters were confounded and mixed, or two put into one, for want of a competent number of actors. Thus in the quarto edition of *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, Act V. Shakspeare introduces a kind of master of the revels called Philostrate; all whose part is given to another character (that of Egeus) in the subsequent editions: so also in *Hamlet* and *King Lear*. This too makes it probable that the prompter's books were what they called the original copies.

* *Much Ado About Nothing*, Act II.: "Enter Prince Leonato, Claudio, and Jack Wilson," instead of Balthasar. And in Act IV. Cowley and Kemp constantly through a whole scene.

Edit. fol. of 1623, and 1632. POPE.

† Such as

"My queen is murder'd! *Ring the little bell.*"

"— His nose grew as sharp as a pen, and a table of green fields;" which last words are not in the quarto. POPE.

There is no such line in any play of Shakspeare, as that quoted above by Mr. Pope. MALONE.

From liberties of this kind, many speeches also were put into the mouths of wrong persons, where the author now seems chargeable with making them speak out of character: or sometimes perhaps for no better reason, than that a governing player, to have the mouthing of some favourite speech himself, would snatch it from the unworthy lips of an underling.

Prose from verse they did not know, and they accordingly printed one for the other throughout the volume.

Having been forced to say so much of the players, I think I ought in justice to remark, that the judgment, as well as condition of that class of people, was then far inferior to what it is in our days. As then the best play-houses were inns and taverns, (the Globe, the Hope, the Red Bull, the Fortune, &c.) so the top of the profession were then mere players, not gentlemen of the stage: they were led into the buttery by the steward*; not placed at the lord's table, or lady's toilette: and consequently were entirely deprived of those advantages they now enjoy in the familiar conversation of our nobility, and an intimacy (not to say dearness) with people of the first condition.

From what has been said, there can be no question but had Shakspeare published his works himself (especially in his latter time, and after his retreat from the stage,) we should not only be certain which are genuine, but should find in those that are, the errors lessened by some thousands. If I may judge from all the distinguishing marks of his style, and his manner of thinking and writing, I make no doubt to declare that those wretched plays, *Pericles*, *Lochrine*, *Sir John Oldcastle*, *Yorkshire Tragedy*, *Lord Cromwell*, *The Puritan*, *London Prodigal*, and a thing called *The Double Falshood*†, cannot be admitted

* Mr. Pope probably recollected the following lines in *The Taming of the Shrew*, spoken by a Lord, who is giving directions to his servant concerning some players:

“Go, sirrah, take them to the *buttery*,

“And give them friendly welcome, every one.”

But he seems not to have observed that the players here introduced were *strollers*; and there is no reason to suppose that our author, Heminge, Burbage, Lowin, &c. who were licensed by King James, were treated in this manner. MALONE.

† *The Double Falshood*, or *The Distressed Lovers*, a play, acted at Drury Lane, 8vo. 1727. This piece was produced by

as his. And I should conjecture of some of the others, (particularly *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Comedy of Errors*, and *Titus Andronicus*,) that only some characters, single scenes, or perhaps a few particular passages, were of his hand. It is very probable what occasioned some plays to be supposed Shakspeare's, was only this; that they were pieces produced by unknown authors, or fitted up for the theatre while it was under his administration; and no owner claiming them, they were adjudged to him, as they give strays to the lord of the manor: a mistake which (one may also observe) it was not for the interest of the house to remove. Yet the players themselves, Heminge and Condell, afterwards did Shakspeare the justice to reject those eight plays in their edition; though they were then printed in his name*, in every body's hands, and acted with some applause (as we learn from what Ben Jonson says of *Pericles* in his ode on the New Inn). That *Titus Andronicus* is one of this class I am the rather induced to believe, by finding the same author openly express his contempt of it in the *Induction to Bartholomew Fair*, in the year 1614, when Shakspeare was yet living. And there is no better authority for these latter sort, than for the former, which were equally published in his life-time.

If we give into this opinion, how many low and vicious parts and passages might no longer reflect upon this great genius, but appear unworthily charged upon him? And even in those which are really his, how many faults may have been unjustly laid to his account from arbitrary additions, expunctions, transpositions of scenes and lines, confusion of characters and persons, wrong application of speeches, corruptions of innumerable passages by the ignorance, and wrong corrections of them again by the impertinence of his first editors? From one or other of these considerations, I am verily persuaded, that the greatest and the grossest part of what are thought his errors would vanish, and leave his character in a light very different from that disadvantageous one, in which it now appears to us.

This is the state in which Shakspeare's writings lie at

Mr. Theobald as a performance of Shakspeare's. See Dr. Farmer's *Essay on the Learning of Shakspeare*. REED.

* His name was affixed only to four of them. MALONE.

present; for since the above-mentioned folio edition, all the rest have implicitly followed it, without having recourse to any of the former, or ever making the comparison between them. It is impossible to repair the injuries already done him; too much time has elapsed, and the materials are too few. In what I have done I have rather given a proof of my willingness and desire, than of my ability, to do him justice. I have discharged the dull duty of an editor, to my best judgment, with more labour than I expect thanks, with a religious abhorrence of all innovation, and without any indulgence to my private sense or conjecture. The method taken in this edition will show itself. The various readings are fairly put in the margin, so that every one may compare them; and those I have preferred into the text are constantly *ex fide codicum*, upon authority. The alterations or additions, which Shakspeare himself made, are taken notice of as they occur. Some suspected passages, which are excessively bad (and which seem interpolations by being so inserted that one can entirely omit them without any chasm, or deficiency in the context) are degraded to the bottom of the page; with an asterisk referring to the places of their insertion. The scenes are marked so distinctly, that every removal of place is specified; which is more necessary in this author than any other, since he shifts them more frequently; and sometimes without attending to this particular, the reader would have met with obscurities. The more obsolete or unusual words are explained. Some of the most shining passages are distinguished by commas in the margin; and where the beauty lay not in particulars, but in the whole, a star is prefixed to the scene. This seems to me a shorter and less ostentatious method of performing the better half of criticism (namely, the pointing out an author's excellencies) than to fill a whole paper with citations of fine passages, with *general applauses* or *empty exclamations* at the tail of them. There is also subjoined a catalogue of those first editions, by which the greater part of the various readings and of the corrected passages are authorized; most of which are such as carry their own evidence along with them. These editions now hold the place of originals, and are the only materials left to repair the deficiencies or restore the corrupted sense of the author: I can only wish that a greater number of them (if a greater were ever published) may yet be found, by a search

more successful than mine, for the better accomplishment of this end.

I will conclude by saying of Shakspeare, that with all his faults, and with all the irregularity of his *drama*, one may look upon his works, in comparison of those that are more finished and regular, as upon an ancient majestick piece of *Gothick* architecture, compared with a neat modern building: the latter is more elegant and glaring, but the former is more strong and more solemn. It must be allowed that in one of these there are materials enough to make many of the other. It has much the greater variety, and much the nobler apartments; though we are often conducted to them by dark, odd, and uncouth passages. Nor does the whole fail to strike us with greater reverence, though many of the parts are childish, ill-placed, and unequal to its grandeur*.

* The following passage by Mr. Pope stands as a preface to the *various readings* at the end of the 8th volume of his edition of Shakspeare, 1728. For the notice of it I am indebted to Mr. Chalmers's Supplemental Apology, p. 261. REED.

"Since the publication of *our* first edition, there having been some attempts upon Shakspeare published by Lewis Theobald, (which he would not communicate during the time wherein that edition was preparing for the press, when *we*, by publick advertisements, did request the assistance of all lovers of this author,) *we* have inserted, in this impression, as many of 'em as are judg'd of any the least advantage to the poet; the whole amounting to about *twenty-five* words.

"But to the end every reader may judge for himself, we have annexed a *compleat list* of the rest; which if he shall think *trivial*, or *erroneous*, either in part, or in whole; at worst it can spoil but a half sheet of paper, that chances to be left vacant here. And we purpose for the future, to do the same with respect to any other persons, who either thro' *candor* or *vanity*, shall communicate or publish, the least things tending to the illustration of our author. *We* have here omitted nothing but *pointings* and mere errors of the press, which I hope the corrector of it has rectify'd; if not, I cou'd wish as accurate an one as Mr. Th. [if he] had been at that trouble, which I desired Mr. Tonson to solicit him to undertake. A. P."

MR. THEOBALD'S

P R E F A C E *.

THE attempt to write upon Shakspeare is like going into a large, a spacious, and a splendid dome, through the conveyance of a narrow and obscure entry. A glare of light suddenly breaks upon you beyond what the avenue at first promised; and a thousand beauties of genius and character, like so many gaudy apartments pouring at once upon the eye, diffuse and throw themselves out to the mind. The prospect is too wide to come within the compass of a single view: it is a gay confusion of pleasing objects, too various to be enjoyed but in a general admiration; and they must be separated and eyed distinctly, in order to give the proper entertainment.

And as, in great piles of building, some parts are often finished up to hit the taste of the *connoisseur*; others more negligently put together, to strike the fancy of a common and unlearned beholder; some parts are made stupendously magnificent and grand, to surprise with the vast design and execution of the architect: others are contracted, to amuse you with his neatness and elegance in little: so, in Shakspeare, we may find *traits* that will stand the test of the severest judgment; and strokes as carelessly hit off, to the level of the more ordinary capacities; some descriptions raised to that pitch of grandeur, as to astonish you with the compass and elevation of his thought; and others copying nature within so narrow, so confined a circle, as if the author's talent lay only at drawing in miniature.

In how many points of light must we be obliged to gaze

* This is Mr. Theobald's preface to his second edition in 1740, and was much curtailed by himself after it had been prefixed to the impression in 1733. STEEVENS.

at this great poet! In how many branches of excellence to consider and admire him! Whether we view him on the side of art or nature, he ought equally to engage our attention: whether we respect the force and greatness of his genius, the extent of his knowledge and reading, the power and address with which he throws out and applies either nature or learning, there is ample scope both for our wonder and pleasure. If his diction, and the clothing of his thoughts attract us, how much more must we be charmed with the richness and variety of his images and ideas! If his images and ideas steal into our souls, and strike upon our fancy, how much are they improved in price when we come to reflect with what propriety and justness they are applied to character! If we look into his characters, and how they are furnished and proportioned to the employment he cuts out for them, how are we taken up with the mastery of his portraits! What draughts of nature! what variety of originals, and how differing each from the other! How are they dressed from the stores of his own luxurious imagination; without being the apes of mode, or borrowing from any foreign wardrobe! Each of them are the standards of fashion for themselves: like gentlemen that are above the direction of their tailors, and can adorn themselves without the aid of imitation. If other poets draw more than one fool or coxcomb, there is the same resemblance in them, as in that painter's draughts who was happy only at forming a rose: you find them all younger brothers of the same family, and all of them have a pretence to give the same crest: but Shakspeare's clowns and fops come all of a different house; they are no farther allied to one another than as man to man, members of the same species; but as different in features and lineaments of character, as we are from one another in face or complexion. But I am unawares launching into his character as a writer, before I have said what I intended of him as a private member of the republick.

Mr. Rowe has very justly observed, that people are fond of discovering any little personal story of the great men of antiquity; and that the common accidents of their lives naturally become the subject of our critical enquiries: that however trifling such a curiosity at the first view may appear, yet, as for what relates to men of letters, the knowledge of an author may, perhaps, some-

times conduce to the better understanding his works ; and, indeed, this author's works, from the bad treatment he has met with from copyists and editors, have so long wanted a comment, that one would zealously embrace every method of information that could contribute to recover them from the injuries with which they have so long lain overwhelmed.

'Tis certain, that if we have first admired the man in his writings, his case is so circumstanced, that we must naturally admire the writings in the man : that if we go back to take a view of his education, and the employment in life which fortune had cut out for him, we shall retain the stronger ideas of his extensive genius.

His father, we are told, was a considerable dealer in wool ; but having no fewer than ten children, of whom our Shakspeare was the eldest, the best education he could afford him was no better than to qualify him for his own business and employment. I cannot affirm with any certainty how long his father lived ; but I take him to be the same Mr. John Shakspeare who was living in the year 1599, and who then, in honour of his son, took out an extract of his family arms from the herald's office ; by which it appears, that he had been officer and bailiff of Stratford-upon-Avon, in Warwickshire ; and that he enjoyed some hereditary lands and tenements, the reward of his great grandfather's faithful and approved service to King Henry VII.

Be this as it will, our Shakspeare, it seems, was bred for some time at a free-school ; the very free-school, I presume, founded at Stratford : where, we are told, he acquired what Latin he was master of : but that his father being obliged, through narrowness of circumstances, to withdraw him too soon from thence, he was thereby unhappily prevented from making any proficiency in the dead languages ; a point that will deserve some little discussion in the sequel of this dissertation.

How long he continued in his father's way of business, either as an assistant to him, or on his own proper account, no notices are left to inform us : nor have I been able to learn precisely at what period of life he quitted his native Stratford, and began his acquaintance with London and the *stage*.

In order to settle in the world after a family manner, he thought fit, Mr. Rowe acquaints us, to marry while he

was yet very young. It is certain he did so : for by the monument in Stratford church, erected to the memory of his daughter Susanna, the wife of John Hall, gentleman, it appears, that she died on the 2d of July, in the year 1649, aged 66. So that she was born in 1583, when her father could not be full 19 years old ; who was himself born in the year 1564. Nor was she his eldest child, for he had another daughter, Judith, who was born before her *, and who was married to one Mr. Thomas Quiney. So that Shakspeare must have entered into wedlock by that time he was turned of seventeen years.

Whether the force of inclination merely, or some concurring circumstances of convenience in the match, prompted him to marry so early, is not easy to be determined at this distance ; but, it is probable, a view of interest might partly sway his conduct in this point : for he married the daughter of one Hathaway, a substantial yeoman in his neighbourhood, and she had the start of him in age no less than eight years. She survived him notwithstanding seven seasons, and died that very year the *players* published the first edition of his works in *folio*, anno Dom. 1623, at the age of 67 years, as we likewise learn from her monument in Stratford church.

How long he continued in this kind of settlement, upon his own native spot, is not more easily to be determined. But if the tradition be true, of that extravagance which forced him both to quit his country and way of living, to wit, his being engaged with a knot of young deer-stealers, to rob the park of Sir Thomas Lucy, of Cherlecot, near Stratford, the enterprize savours so much of youth and levity, we may reasonably suppose it was before he could write full man. Besides, considering he has left us six-and-thirty plays at least, avowed to be genuine ; and considering too that he had retired from the stage, to spend the latter part of his days at his own native Stratford ; the interval of time necessarily required for the finishing so many dramatick pieces, obliges us to suppose he threw himself very early upon the play-house. And as he could, probably, contract no acquaintance with the drama, while he was driving on the affair of wool at home ; some time must be lost even after he had commenced player,

* See the extracts from the register-book of the parish of Stratford, in vol. ii. STEEVENS.

before he could attain knowledge enough in the science to qualify himself for turning author.

It has been observed by Mr. Rowe, that amongst other extravagances, which our author has given to his Sir John Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, he has made him a deer-stealer; and, that he might at the same time remember his Warwickshire prosecutor, under the name of Justice Shallow, he has given him very near the same coat of arms, which Dugdale, in his *Antiquities* of that county, describes for a family there. There are two coats, I observe, in Dugdale, where three silver fishes are borne in the name of Lucy; and another coat, to the monument of Thomas Lucy, son of Sir William Lucy, in which are quartered, in four several divisions, twelve little fishes, three in each division, probably *Luces*. This very coat, indeed, seems alluded to in Shallow's giving the *dozen* white *Luces*, and in Slender saying *he may quarter*. When I consider the exceeding candour and good-nature of our author (which inclined all the gentler part of the world to love him, as the power of his wit obliged the men of the most delicate knowledge and polite learning to admire him): and that he should throw this humorous piece of satire at his prosecutor, at least twenty years after the provocation given; I am confidently persuaded it must be owing to an unforgiving rancour on the prosecutor's side: and, if this was the case, it were pity but the disgrace of such an inveteracy should remain as a lasting reproach, and Shallow stand as a mark of ridicule to stigmatize his malice.

It is said, our author spent some years before his death in ease, retirement, and the conversation of his friends, at his native Stratford. I could never pick up any certain intelligence, when he relinquished the stage. I know, it has been mistakenly thought by some, that Spenser's *Thalia*, in his *Tears of the Muses*, where she laments the loss of her Willy in the comick scene, has been applied to our author's quitting the stage. But Spenser himself, it is well known, quitted the stage of life in the year 1598; and, five years after this, we find Shakspeare's name among the actors in Ben Jonson's *Sejanus*, which first made its appearance in the year 1603. Nor surely, could he then have any thoughts of retiring, since that very year a licence under the privy-seal was granted by King James I. to him and Fletcher, Burbage, Phillippes, Hemings, Con-

dell, &c. authorizing them to exercise the art of playing comedies, tragedies, &c. as well at their usual house called the Globe on the other side of the water, as in any other parts of the kingdom, during his majesty's pleasure (a copy of which licence is preserved in Rymer's *Fœdera*). Again, it is certain, that Shakspeare did not exhibit his *Macbeth* till after the Union was brought about, and till after King James I. had begun to touch for the *evil*: for it is plain, he has inserted compliments on both those accounts, upon his royal master in that tragedy. Nor, indeed, could the number of the dramatick pieces, he produced, admit of his retiring near so early as that period. So that what Spenser there says, if it relate at all to Shakspeare, must hint at some occasional recess he made for a time upon a disgust taken: or the Willy, there mentioned, must relate to some other favourite poet. I believe, we may safely determine, that he had not quitted in the year 1610. For, in his *Tempest*, our author makes mention of the Bermuda islands, which were unknown to the English, till, in 1609, Sir John Summers made a voyage to North-America, and discovered them, and afterwards invited some of his countrymen to settle a plantation there. That he became the private gentleman at least three years before his decease, is pretty obvious from another circumstance; I mean, from that remarkable and well-known story, which Mr. Rowe has given us of our author's intimacy with Mr. John Combe, an old gentleman noted thereabouts for his wealth and usury: and upon whom Shakspeare made the following facetious epitaph:

“ Ten in the hundred lies here ingrav'd,
 “ 'Tis a hundred to ten his soul is not sav'd;
 “ If any man ask, who lies in this tomb,
 “ Oh! oh! quoth the devil, 'tis my John-a-Combe.”

This sarcastical piece of wit was, at the gentleman's own request, thrown out extemporally in his company. And this Mr. John Combe I take to be the same, who, by Dugdale in his *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, is said to have died in the year 1614*, and for whom, at the upper end of the quire of the Guild of the Holy Cross at Strat-

* By Mr. Combe's Will, which is now in the Prerogative-office in London, Shakspeare had a legacy of five pounds bequeathed to him. The Will is without any date. REED.

ford, a fair monument is erected, having a statue thereon cut in alabaster, and in a gown, with this epitaph: "Here lieth interred the body of John Combe, Esq. who died the 10th of July, 1614, who bequeathed several annual charities to the parish of Stratford, and 100l. to be lent to fifteen poor tradesmen from three years to three years, changing the parties every third year, at the rate of fifty shillings per annum, the increase to be distributed to the almes-poor there."—The donation has all the air of a rich and sagacious usurer.

Shakspeare himself did not survive Mr. Combe long, for he died in the year 1616, the 53d of his age. He lies buried on the north side of the chancel in the great church at Stratford; where a monument, decent enough for the time, is erected to him, and placed against the wall. He is represented under an arch in a sitting posture, a cushion spread before him with a pen in his right hand, and his left rested on a scrawl of paper. The Latin distich, which is placed under the cushion, has been given us by Mr. Pope, or his graver, in this manner:

INGENIO Pylum, genio Socratem, arte Maronem,
Terra tegit, populus mœret, Olympus habet.

I confess, I do not conceive the difference between *ingenio* and *genio* in the first verse. They seem to me intirely synonymous terms: nor was the Pylian sage Nestor celebrated for his ingenuity, but for an experience and judgment owing to his long age. Dugdale, in his *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, has copied this distich with a distinction which Mr. Rowe has followed, and which certainly restores us the true meaning of the epitaph:

JUDICIO Pylum, genio Socratem, &c.

In 1614, the greater part of the town of Stratford was consumed by fire; but our Shakspeare's house, among some others, escaped the flames. This house was first built by Sir Hugh Clopton, a younger brother of an ancient family in that neighbourhood, who took their name from the manor of Clopton. Sir Hugh was Sheriff of London in the reign of Richard III. and Lord-Mayor in the reign of King Henry VII. To this gentleman the town of Stratford is indebted for the fine stone bridge, consisting of fourteen arches, which, at an extraordinary

expence, he built over the Avon, together with a causeway running at the west-end thereof; as also for rebuilding the chapel adjoining to his house, and the cross-aisle in the church there. It is remarkable of him that though he lived and died a bachelor, among the other extensive charities which he left both to the city of London and town of Stratford, he bequeathed considerable legacies for the marriage of poor maidens of good name and fame both in London and at Stratford. Notwithstanding which large donations in his life, and bequests at his death, as he had purchased the manor of Clopton, and all the estate of the family; so he left the same again to his elder brother's son with a very great addition: (a proof how well beneficence and œconomy may walk hand in hand in wise families :) good part of which estate is yet in the possession of Edward Clopton, Esq. and Sir Hugh Clopton, Knt. lineally descended from the elder brother of the first Sir Hugh, who particularly bequeathed to his nephew, by his will, his house, by the name of his Great House in Stratford.

The estate had now been sold out of the Clopton family for above a century, at the time when Shakspeare became the purchaser; who, having repaired and modelled it to his own mind, changed the name to New-Place, which the mansion-house, since erected upon the same spot, at this day retains. The house and lands, which attended it, continued in Shakspeare's descendants to the time of the *Restoration*; when they were re-purchased by the Clopton family, and the mansion now belongs to Sir Hugh Clopton, Knt. To the favour of this worthy gentleman I owe the knowledge of one particular, in honour of our poet's once dwelling-house, of which, I presume, Mr. Rowe never was apprized. When the civil war raged in England, and King Charles the First's queen was driven by the necessity of affairs to make a recess in Warwickshire, she kept her court for three weeks in New-Place. We may reasonably suppose it then the best private house in the town; and her majesty preferred it to the college, which was in the possession of the Combe family, who did not so strongly favour the king's party.

How much our author employed himself in poetry, after his retirement from the stage, does not so evidently appear: very few posthumous sketches of his pen have been recovered to ascertain that point. We have been told, in-

deed, in print*, but not till very lately, that two large chests full of this great man's loose papers and manuscripts, in the hands of an ignorant baker of Warwick, (who married one of the descendants from our Shakspeare,) were carelessly scattered and thrown about as garret lumber and litter, to the particular knowledge of the late Sir William Bishop, till they were all consumed in the general fire and destruction of that town. I cannot help being a little apt to distrust the authority of this tradition, because his wife survived him seven years; and, as his favourite daughter Susanna survived her twenty-six years, it is very improbable they should suffer such a treasure to be removed, and translated into a remoter branch of the family, without a scrutiny first made into the value of it. This, I say, inclines me to distrust the authority of the relation: but notwithstanding such an apparent improbability, if we really lost such a treasure, by whatever fatality or caprice of fortune they came into such ignorant and neglected hands, I agree with the *relater*, the misfortune is wholly irreparable.

To these particulars, which regard his person and private life, some few more are to be gleaned from Mr. Rowe's Account of his Life and Writings: let us now take a short view of him in his publick capacity as a *writer*: and, from thence, the transition will be easy to the *state* in which his *writings* have been handed down to us.

No age, perhaps, can produce an author more various from himself, than Shakspeare has been universally acknowledged to be. The diversity in style, and other parts of composition, so obvious in him, is as variously to be accounted for. His education, we find, was at best but begun: and he started early into a science from the force of genius, unequally assisted by acquired improvements. His fire, spirit, and exuberance of imagination, gave an impetuosity to his pen: his ideas flowed from him in a stream rapid, but not turbulent; copious, but not ever overbearing its shores. The ease and sweetness of his temper might not a little contribute to his facility in writing; as his employment as a *player*, gave him an advantage and habit of fancying himself the very character he meant to delineate. He used the helps of his function in

* See an answer to Mr. Pope's Preface to Shakspeare, by a Strolling Player, 8vo. 1729, p. 45. REED.

forming himself to create and express that sublime, which other actors can only copy, and throw out in action and graceful attitude. But, *Nullum sine veniâ placuit ingenium*, says Seneca. The genius, that gives us the greatest pleasure, sometimes stands in need of our indulgence. Whenever this happens with regard to Shakspeare, I would willingly impute it to a vice of his times. We see complaisance enough, in our days, paid to a bad taste. So that his clinches, false wit, and descending beneath himself, may have proceeded from a deference paid to the then reigning barbarism.

I have not thought it out of my province, whenever occasion offered, to take notice of some of our poet's grand touches of nature, some, that do not appear sufficiently such, but in which he seems the most deeply instructed; and to which, no doubt, he has so much owed that happy preservation of his characters, for which he is justly celebrated. Great geniuses, like his, naturally unambitious, are satisfied to conceal their arts in these points. It is the foible of your worser poets to make a parade and ostentation of that little science they have; and to throw it out in the most ambitious colours. And whenever a writer of this class shall attempt to copy these artful concealments of our author, and shall either think them easy, or practised by a writer for his ease, he will soon be convinced of his mistake by the difficulty of reaching the imitation of them.

Speret idem, sudet multùm, frustrâque laboret,
Ausus idem——.

Indeed to point out and exclaim upon all the beauties of Shakspeare, as they come singly in review, would be as insipid, as endless; as tedious, as unnecessary: but the explanation of those beauties that are less obvious to common readers, and whose illustration depends on the rules of just criticism, and an exact knowledge of human life, should deservedly have a share in a general critique upon the author. But to pass over at once to another subject:——

It has been allowed on all hands, how far our author was indebted to nature: it is not so well agreed, how much he owed to languages and acquired learning.* The deci-

* It has been allowed, &c.] On this subject an eminent

sions on this subject were certainly set on foot by the hint from Ben Jonson, that he had small Latin, and less Greek : and from this tradition, as it were, Mr. Rowe has thought fit peremptorily to declare, that, "It is without controversy, he had no knowledge of the writings of the ancient poets, for that in his works we find no traces of any thing which looks like an imitation of the ancients. For the delicacy of his taste (continues he) and the natural bent of his own great genius (equal, if not superior, to some of the best of theirs,) would certainly have led him to read and study them with so much pleasure, that some of their fine images would naturally have insinuated themselves into, and been mixed with, his own writings : and so his not copying, at least something from them, may be an argument of his never having read them." I shall leave it to the determination of my learned readers, from the numerous passages which I have occasionally quoted in my notes, in which our poet seems closely to have imitated the classicks, whether Mr. Rowe's assertion be so absolutely to be depended on. The result of the controversy must certainly, either way, terminate to our author's honour : how happily he could imitate them, if that point be allowed ; or how gloriously he could think like them, without owing any thing to imitation.

writer has given his opinion which should not be suppressed. "You will ask me, perhaps, now I am on this subject, how it happened that Shakspeare's language is every where so much his own as to secure his imitations, if they were such, from discovery ; when I pronounce with such assurance of those of our other poets. The answer is given for me in the preface to Mr. Theobald's Shakspeare ; though the observation I think, is too good to come from that critick. It is, that though his words, agreeably to the state of the English tongue at that time, be generally Latin, his phraseology is perfectly English ; an advantage he owed to his slender acquaintance with the Latin idiom. Whereas the other writers of his age, and such others of an older date as were likely to fall into his hands, had not only the most familiar acquaintance with the Latin idiom, but affected on all occasions to make use of it. Hence it comes to pass, that though he might draw sometimes from the Latin (Ben Jonson you know tells us *He had less Greek,*) and the learned English writers, he takes nothing but the sentiments ; the expression comes of itself and is purely English." Bishop Hurd's Letter to Mr. Mason, on the Marks of Imitation, 8vo. 1758. REED.

Though I should be very unwilling to allow Shakspeare so poor a scholar, as many have laboured to represent him, yet I shall be very cautious of declaring too positively on the other side of the question; that is, with regard to my opinion of his knowledge in the dead languages. And therefore the passages, that I occasionally quote from the classicks, shall not be urged as proofs that he knowingly imitated those originals; but brought to show how happily he has expressed himself upon the same topics. A very learned critick of our own nation has declared, that a sameness of thought and sameness of expression too, in two writers of a different age, can hardly happen, without a violent suspicion of the latter copying from his predecessor. I shall not therefore run any great risque of a censure, though I should venture to hint, that the resemblances in thought and expression of our author and an ancient (which we should allow to be imitation in the one whose learning was not questioned) may sometimes take its rise from strength of memory, and those impressions which he owed to the school. And if we may allow a possibility of this, considering that, when he quitted the school, he gave into his father's profession and way of living, and had, it is likely, but a slender library of classical learning; and considering what a number of translations, romances, and legends, started about his time, and a little before (most of which, it is very evident, he read); I think it may easily be reconciled why he rather schemed his plots and characters from these more latter informations, than went back to those fountains, for which he might entertain a sincere veneration, but to which he could not have so ready a recourse.

In touching on another part of his learning, as it related to the knowledge of history and books, I shall advance something that, at first sight, will very much wear the appearance of a paradox. For I shall find it no hard matter to prove, that, from the grossest blunders in history, we are not to infer his real ignorance of it; nor from a greater use of Latin words, than ever any other English author used, must we infer his intimate acquaintance with that language.

A reader of taste may easily observe, that though Shakspeare, almost in every scene of his historical plays, commits the grossest offences against chronology, history, and ancient politicks; yet this was not through ignorance, as

is generally supposed, but through the too powerful blaze of his imagination, which, when once raised, made all acquired knowledge vanish and disappear before it. But this licence in him, as I have said, must not be imputed to ignorance, since as often we may find him, when occasion serves, reasoning up to the truth of history; and throwing out sentiments as justly adapted to the circumstances of his subject, as to the dignity of his characters, or dictates of nature in general.

Then to come to his knowledge of the Latin tongue, it is certain, there is a surprising effusion of Latin words made English, far more than in any one English author I have seen; but we must be cautious to imagine, this was of his own doing. For the English tongue, in this age, began extremely to suffer by an inundation of Latin: and this, to be sure, was occasioned by the pedantry of those two monarchs, Elizabeth and James, both great Latinists. For it is not to be wondered at, if both the court and schools, equal flatterers of power, should adapt themselves to the royal taste.

But now I am touching on the question (which has been so frequently agitated, yet so entirely undecided,) of his learning and acquaintance with the languages; an additional word or two naturally falls in here upon the genius of our author, as compared with that of Jonson his contemporary. They are confessedly the greatest writers our nation could ever boast of in the drama. The first, we say, owed all to his prodigious natural genius; and the other a great deal to his art and learning. This, if attended to, will explain a very remarkable appearance in their writings. Besides those wonderful master-pieces of art and genius, which each has given us; they are the authors of other works very unworthy of them: but with this difference, that in Jonson's bad pieces we do not discover one single trace of the author of *The Fox and Alchemist*; but, in the wild extravagant notes of Shakspeare, you every now and then encounter strains that recognize the divine composer. This difference may be thus accounted for. Jonson, as we said before, owing all his excellence to his art, by which he sometimes strained himself to an uncommon pitch, when at other times he unbent and played with his subject, having nothing then to support him, it is no wonder that he wrote so far beneath himself. But Shakspeare, indebted more largely to nature than the

other to acquired talents, in his most negligent hours could never so totally divest himself of his genius, but that it would frequently break out with astonishing force and splendor.

As I have never proposed to dilate farther on the character of my author, than was necessary to explain the nature and use of this edition, I shall proceed to consider him as a genius in possession of an everlasting name. And how great that merit must be, which could gain it against all the disadvantages of the horrid condition in which he has hitherto appeared! Had Homer, or any other admired author, first started into publick so maimed and deformed, we cannot determine whether they had not sunk for ever under the ignominy of such an ill appearance. The mangled condition of Shakspeare has been acknowledged by Mr. Rowe, who published him indeed, but neither corrected his text, nor collated the old copies. This gentleman had abilities, and sufficient knowledge of his author, had but his industry been equal to his talents. The same mangled condition has been acknowledged too by Mr. Pope, who published him likewise, pretended to have collated the old copies, and yet seldom has corrected the text but to its injury. I congratulate with the *manes* of our poet, that this gentleman has been sparing in *indulging his private sense*, as he phrases it; for he who tampers with an author, whom he does not understand, must do it at the expence of his subject. I have made it evident throughout my remarks, that he has frequently inflicted a wound where he intended a cure. He has acted with regard to our author, as an editor, whom Lipsius mentions, did with regard to Martial; "*Inventus est nescio quis Popa, qui non vitia ejus, sed ipsum excidit.*" He has attacked him like an unhandy slaughterman; and not lopped off the errors, but the poet.

When this is found to be fact, how absurd must appear the praises of such an editor! It seems a moot point, whether Mr. Pope has done most injury to Shakspeare, as his editor and encomiast; or Mr. Rymer done him service, as his rival and censor. They have both shown themselves in an equal *impuissance* of suspecting or amending the corrupted passages: and though it be neither prudence to censure or commend what one does not understand; yet if a man must do one when he plays the critick, the latter is the most ridiculous office; and by that

Shakspeare suffers most. For the natural veneration which we have for him makes us apt to swallow whatever is given us as his, and set off with encomiums; and hence we quit all suspicions of depravity: on the contrary, the censure of so divine an author sets us upon his defence; and this produces an exact scrutiny and examination, which ends in finding out and discriminating the true from the spurious.

It is not with any secret pleasure that I so frequently animadvert on Mr. Pope as a critick, but there are provocations, which a man can never quite forget. His libels have been thrown out with so much inveteracy, that, not to dispute whether they should come from a christian, they leave it a question whether they could come from a man. I should be loth to doubt, as Quintus Serenus did in a like case:

Sive homo, seu similis turpissima bestia nobis
Vulnera dente dedit——.

The indignation, perhaps, for being represented a block-head, may be as strong in us, as it is in the ladies for a reflection on their beauties. It is certain I am indebted to him for some *flagrant civilities*; and I shall willingly devote a part of my life to the honest endeavour of quitting scores: with this exception, however, that I will not return those civilities in his peculiar strain, but confine myself, at least, to the limits of common decency. I shall ever think it better to want wit, than to want humanity: and impartial posterity may, perhaps, be of my opinion.

But to return to my subject, which now calls upon me to enquire into those causes, to which the depravations of my author originally may be assigned. We are to consider him as a writer, of whom no authentick manuscript was left extant; as a writer, whose pieces were dispersedly performed on the several stages then in being. And it was the custom of those days for the poets to take a price of the players for the pieces they from time to time furnished; and thereupon it was supposed they had no farther right to print them without the consent of the players. As it was the interest of the companies to keep their plays unpublished, when any one succeeded, there was a contest betwixt the curiosity of the town, who demanded to see it in print, and the policy of the *stagers*, who wished to secrete it within their own walls. Hence

many pieces were taken down in short-hand, and imperfectly copied by ear from a representation; others were printed from piecemeal parts surreptitiously obtained from the theatres, uncorrect, and without the poet's knowledge. To some of these causes we owe the train of blemishes, that deform those pieces which stole singly into the world in our author's life-time.

There are still other reasons, which may be supposed to have affected the whole set. When the players took upon them to publish his works entire, every theatre was ransacked to supply the copy; and parts collected, which had gone through as many changes as performers, either from mutilations or additions made to them. Hence we derive many chasms and incoherences in the sense and matter. Scenes were frequently transposed, and shuffled out of their true place, to humour the caprice, or supposed convenience, of some particular actor. Hence much confusion and impropriety has attended and embarrassed the business and fable. To these obvious causes of corruption it must be added, that our authour has lain under the disadvantage of having his errors propagated and multiplied by time: because, for near a century, his works were published from the faulty copies, without the assistance of any intelligent editor: which has been the case likewise of many a classick writer.

The nature of any distemper once found has generally been the immediate step to a cure. Shakspeare's case has in a great measure resembled that of a corrupt classick; and, consequently, the method of cure was likewise to bear a resemblance. By what means, and with what success, this cure has been effected on ancient writers, is too well known, and needs no formal illustration. The reputation, consequent on tasks of that nature, invited me to attempt the method here; with this view, the hopes of restoring to the publick their greatest poet in his original purity, after having so long lain in a condition that was a disgrace to common sense. To this end I have ventured on a labour, that is the first assay of the kind on any modern author whatsoever. For the late edition of Milton, by the learned Dr. Bentley, is, in the main, a performance of another species. It is plain, it was the intention of that great man rather to correct and pare off the excrescencies of the *Paradise Lost*, in the manner that Tucca and Varius were employed to criticise the *Æneis* of Virgil,

than to restore corrupted passages. Hence, therefore, may be seen either the iniquity or ignorance of his censurers, who, from some expressions would make us believe the doctor every where gives us his corrections as the original text of the author; whereas the chief turn of his criticism is plainly to show the world, that, if Milton did not write as he would have him, he ought to have wrote so.

I thought proper to premise this observation to the readers, as it will show that the critick on Shakspeare is of a quite different kind. His genuine text is for the most part religiously adhered to, and the numerous faults and blemishes, purely his own, are left as they were found. Nothing is altered but what by the clearest reasoning can be proved a corruption of the true text; and the alteration, a real restoration of the genuine reading. Nay, so strictly have I strove to give the true reading, though sometimes not to the advantage of my author, that I have been ridiculously ridiculed for it by those, who either were iniquitously for turning every thing to my disadvantage; or else were totally ignorant of the true duty of an editor.

The science of criticism, as far as it affects an editor, seems to be reduced to these three classes: the emendation of corrupt passages; the explanation of obscure and difficult ones; and an enquiry into the beauties and defects of composition. This work is principally confined to the two former parts: though there are some specimens interspersed of the latter kind, as several of the emendations were best supported, and several of the difficulties best explained, by taking notice of the beauties and defects of the composition peculiar to this immortal poet. But this was but occasional, and for the sake only of perfecting the two other parts, which were the proper objects of the editor's labour. The third lies open for every willing undertaker: and I shall be pleased to see it the employment of a masterly pen.

It must necessarily happen, as I have formerly observed, that where the assistance of manuscripts is wanting to set an author's meaning right, and rescue him from those errors which have been transmitted down through a series of incorrect editions, and a long intervention of time, many passages must be desperate, and past a cure; and their true sense irretrievable either to care or the sa-

gacity of conjecture. But is there any reason therefore to say, that because all cannot be retrieved, all ought to be left desperate? We should show very little honesty, or wisdom, to play the tyrants with an author's text; to raze, alter, innovate, and overturn, at all adventures, and to the utter detriment of his sense and meaning: but to be so very reserved and cautious, as to interpose no relief or conjecture, where it manifestly labours and cries out for assistance, seems, on the other hand, an indolent absurdity.

As there are very few pages in Shakspeare, upon which some suspicions of depravity do not reasonably arise; I have thought it my duty in the first place, by a diligent and laborious collation, to take in the assistances of all the older copies.

In his historical plays, whenever our English chronicles, and in his tragedies, when Greek or Roman story could give any light, no pains have been omitted to set passages right, by comparing my author with his originals; for, as I have frequently observed, he was a close and accurate copier wherever his fable was founded on history.

Wherever the author's sense is clear and discoverable, (though, perchance, low and trivial,) I have not by any innovation tampered with his text, out of an ostentation of endeavouring to make him speak better than the old copies have done.

Where, through all the former editions, a passage has laboured under flat nonsense and invincible darkness, if, by the addition or alteration of a letter or two, or a transposition in the pointing, I have restored to him both sense and sentiment; such corrections, I am persuaded, will need no indulgence.

And whenever I have taken a greater latitude and liberty in amending, I have constantly endeavoured to support my corrections and conjectures by parallel passages and authorities from himself, the surest means of expounding any author whatsoever. "*Cette voie d'interpreter un auteur par lui-même est plus sûre que tous les commentaires,*" says a very learned French critick.

As to my notes, (from which the common and learned readers of our author, I hope, will derive some satisfaction,) I have endeavoured to give them a variety in some proportion to their number. Wherever I have ventured at an emendation, a note is constantly subjoined to justify

and assert the reason of it. Where I only offer a conjecture, and do not disturb the text, I fairly set forth my grounds for such conjecture, and submit it to judgment. Some remarks are spent in explaining passages, where the wit or satire depends on an obscure point of history: others, where allusions are to divinity, philosophy, or other branches of science. Some are added, to show where there is a suspicion of our author having borrowed from the ancients: others, to show where he is rallying his contemporaries; or where he himself is rallied by them. And some are necessarily thrown in, to explain an obscure and obsolete term, phrase, or idea. I once intended to have added a complete and copious glossary; but as I have been importuned, and am prepared to give a correct edition of our author's Poems, (in which many terms occur which are not to be met with in his Plays,) I thought a glossary to all Shakspeare's works more proper to attend that volume.

In reforming an infinite number of passages in the pointing, where the sense was before quite lost, I have frequently subjoined notes to show the depraved, and to prove the reformed, pointing: a part of labour in this work which I could very willingly have spared myself. May it not be objected, why then have you burdened us with these notes? The answer is obvious, and, if I mistake not, very material. Without such notes, these passages in subsequent editions would be liable, through the ignorance of printers and correctors, to fall into the old confusion: whereas, a note on every one hinders all possible return to depravity: and for ever secures them in a state of purity and integrity not to be lost or forfeited.

Again, as some notes have been necessary to point out the detection of the corrupted text, and establish the restoration of the genuine reading; some others have been as necessary for the explanation of passages obscure and difficult. To understand the necessity and use of this part of my task, some particulars of my author's character are previously to be explained. There are obscurities in him, which are common to him with all poets of the same species; there are others, the issue of the times he lived in; and there are others, again, peculiar to himself. The nature of comick poetry being entirely satirical, it busies itself more in exposing what we call caprice and humour, than vices cognizable to the laws. The English,

from the happiness of a free constitution, and a turn of mind peculiarly speculative and inquisitive, are observed to produce more humourists, and a greater variety of original characters, than any other people whatsoever: and these owing their immediate birth to the peculiar genius of each age, an infinite number of things alluded to, glanced at, and exposed, must needs become obscure, as the characters themselves are antiquated and disused. An editor therefore should be well versed in the history and manners of his author's age, if he aims at doing him a service in this respect.

Besides, wit lying mostly in the assemblage of ideas, and in putting those together with quickness and variety, wherein can be found any resemblance, or congruity, to make up pleasant pictures, and agreeable visions in the fancy; the writer, who aims at wit, must of course range far and wide for materials. Now the age in which Shakspeare lived, having, above all others, a wonderful affection to appear learned, they declined vulgar images, such as are immediately fetched from nature, and ranged through the circle of the sciences, to fetch their ideas from thence. But as the resemblances of such ideas to the subject must necessarily lie very much out of the common way, and every piece of wit appear a riddle to the vulgar; this, that should have taught them the forced, quaint, unnatural tract they were in, (and induce them to follow a more natural one,) was the very thing that kept them attached to it. The ostentatious affectation of abstruse learning, peculiar to that time, the love that men naturally have to every thing that looks like mystery, fixed them down to the habit of obscurity. Thus became the poetry of Donne (though the wittiest man of that age) nothing but a continued heap of riddles. And our Shakspeare, with all his easy nature about him, for want of the knowledge of the true rules of art, falls frequently into this vicious manner.

The third species of obscurities which deform our author, as the effects of his own genius and character, are those that proceed from his peculiar manner of thinking, and as peculiar a manner of clothing those thoughts. With regard to his thinking, it is certain, that he had a general knowledge of all the sciences: but his acquaintance was rather that of a traveller than a native. Nothing in philosophy was unknown to him; but every thing in it had

the grace and force of novelty. And as novelty is one main source of admiration, we are not to wonder that he has perpetual allusions to the most recondite parts of the sciences: and this was done not so much out of affectation, as the effect of admiration begot by novelty. Then, as to his style and diction, we may much more justly apply to Shakspeare, what a celebrated writer said of Milton: "Our language sunk under him, and was unequal to that greatness of soul which furnished him with such glorious conceptions." He therefore frequently uses old words, to give his diction an air of solemnity; as he coins others, to express the novelty and variety of his ideas.

Upon every distinct species of these obscurities, I have thought it my province to employ a note for the service of my author, and the entertainment of my readers. A few transient remarks too I have not scrupled to intermix, upon the poet's negligences and omissions in point of art; but I have done it always in such a manner, as will testify my deference and veneration for the immortal author. Some censurers of Shakspeare, and particularly Mr. Rymer, have taught me to distinguish betwixt the railer and critick. The outrage of his quotations is so remarkably violent, so pushed beyond all bounds of decency and sober reasoning, that it quite carries over the mark at which it was levelled. Extravagant abuse throws off the edge of the intended disparagement, and turns the madman's weapon into his own bosom. In short, as to Rymer, this is my opinion of him from his criticisms on the tragedies of the last age. He writes with great vivacity, and appears to have been a scholar: but as for his knowledge of the art of poetry, I cannot perceive it was any deeper than his acquaintance with Bossu and Dacier, from whom he has transcribed many of his best reflections. The late Mr. Gildon was one attached to Rymer by a similar way of thinking and studies. They were both of that species of criticks who are desirous of displaying their powers rather in finding faults, than in consulting the improvement of the world; the hypercritical part of the science of criticism.

I had not mentioned the modest liberty I have here and there taken of animadverting on my author, but that I was willing to obviate in time the splenetick exaggerations of my adversaries on this head. From past experiments I have reason to be conscious, in what light this

attempt may be placed : and that what I call a modest liberty will, by a little of their dexterity, be inverted into downright impudence. From a hundred mean and dishonest artifices employed to discredit this edition, and to cry down its editor, I have all the grounds in nature to beware of attacks. But though the malice of wit, joined to the smoothness of versification, may furnish some ridicule ; fact, I hope, will be able to stand its ground against banter and gaiety.

It has been my fate, it seems, as I thought it my duty, to discover some anachronisms in our author ; which might have slept in obscurity but for this Restorer, as Mr. Pope is pleased affectionately to style me : as for instance, where Aristotle is mentioned by Hector in Troilus and Cresida ; and Galen, Cato, and Alexander the Great, in Coriolanus. These, in Mr. Pope's opinion, are blunders, which the illiteracy of the first publishers of his works has fathered upon the poet's memory : " it not being at all credible, that these could be the errors of any man who had the least tincture of a school, or the least conversation with such as had." But I have sufficiently proved, in the course of my notes, that such anachronisms were the effect of poetick licence, rather than of ignorance in our poet. And if I may be permitted to ask a modest question by the way, why may not I restore an anachronism really made by our author, as well as Mr. Pope take the privilege to fix others upon him, which he never had it in his head to make ; as I may venture to affirm he had not, in the instance of Sir Francis Drake, to which I have spoke in the proper place ?

But who shall dare make any words about this freedom of Mr. Pope's towards Shakspeare, if it can be proved, that, in his fits of criticism, he makes no more ceremony with good Homer himself ? To try, then, a criticism of his own advancing : in the 8th book of The Odyssey, where Demodocus sings the episode of the loves of Mars and Venus ; and that, upon their being taken in the net by Vulcan,

" —————The god of arms

" Must pay the penalty for lawless charms ;"

Mr. Pope is so kind gravely to inform us, " That Homer in this, as in many other places, seems to allude to the laws

of Athens, where death was the punishment of adultery." But how is this significant observation made out? Why, who can possibly object any thing to the contrary?—"Does not Pausanias relate that Draco, the lawgiver to the Athenians, granted impunity to any person that took revenge upon an adulterer? And was it not also the institution of Solon, that if any one took an adulterer in the fact, he might use him as he pleased?" These things are very true: and to see what a good memory, and sound judgment in conjunction, can achieve! though Homer's date is not determined down to a single year, yet it is pretty generally agreed that he lived above three hundred years before Draco and Solon: and that, it seems, has made him *seem* to allude to the very laws, which these two legislators propounded above three hundred years after. If this inference be not something like an anachronism or prolepsis, I will look once more into my lexicons for the true meaning of the words. It appears to me, that somebody besides Mars and Venus has been caught in a net by this episode: and I could call in other instances, to confirm what treacherous tackle this net-work is, if not cautiously handled.

How just, notwithstanding, I have been in detecting the anachronisms of my author, and in defending him for the use of them, our late editor seems to think, they should rather have slept in obscurity: and the having discovered them is sneered at, as a sort of wrong-headed sagacity.

The numerous corrections which I have made of the poet's text in my Shakspeare Restored, and which the publick have been so kind to think well of, are, in the appendix of Mr. Pope's last edition, slightly called various readings, guesses, &c. He confesses to have inserted as many of them as he judged of any the least advantage to the poet; but says, that the whole amounted to about twenty-five words: and pretends to have annexed a complete list of the rest, which were not worth his embracing. Whoever has read my book will, at one glance, see how in both these points veracity is strained, so an injury might be done. "*Malus, etsi obesse non potest, tamen cogitat.*"

Another expedient to make my work appear of a trifling nature, has been an attempt to depreciate literal criticism. To this end, and to pay a servile compliment to Mr. Pope,

an anonymous writer* has, like a Scotch pedlar in wit, unbraced his pack on the subject. But, that his virulence might not seem to be levelled singly at me, he has done me the honour to join Dr. Bentley in the libel. I was in hopes we should have been both abused with smartness of satire at least, though not with solidity of argument; that it might have been worth some reply in defence of the science attacked. But I may fairly say of this author, as Falstaff does of Poins:—"Hang him, baboon! his wit is as thick as Tewksbury mustard; there is no more conceit in him, than is in a *Mallet*." If it be not a prophanation to set the opinion of the divine Longinus against such a scribbler, he tells us expressly, "That to make a judgment upon words (and writings) is the most consummate fruit of much experience." ἡ γὰρ τῶν λόγων κρίσις πολλῆς ἐστὶ πείρας τελευταῖον ἐπιγένημα. Whenever words are depraved, the sense of course must be corrupted; and thence the reader is betrayed into a false meaning.

If the Latin and Greek languages have received the greatest advantages imaginable from the labours of the editors and criticks of the two last ages, by whose aid and assistance the grammarians have been enabled to write infinitely better in that art than even the preceding grammarians, who wrote when those tongues flourished as living languages; I should account it a peculiar happiness, that, by the faint essay I have made in this work, a path might be chalked out for abler hands, by which to derive the same advantages to our own tongue; a tongue, which, though it wants none of the fundamental qualities of an universal language, yet, as a noble writer says, lisps and stammers as in its cradle; and has produced little more towards its polishing than complaints of its barbarity.

Having now run through all those points, which I intended should make any part of this dissertation, and having in my former edition made publick acknowledgments of the assistances lent me, I shall conclude with a brief account of the methods taken in this.

It was thought proper, in order to reduce the bulk and price of the impression, that the notes, wherever they would admit of it, might be abridged: for which reason I have curtailed a great quantity of such, in which expla-

* David Mallet. See his poem *Of Verbal Criticism*, vol. i. of his works, 12mo. 1759. REED.

nations were too prolix, or authorities in support of an emendation too numerous: and many I have entirely expunged, which were judged rather verbose and declamatory (and so notes merely of ostentation) than necessary or instructive.

The few literal errors which had escaped notice for want of revisals, in the former edition, are here reformed; and the pointing of innumerable passages is regulated, with all the accuracy I am capable of.

I shall decline making any farther declaration of the pains I have taken upon my author, because it was my duty, as his editor, to publish him with my best care and judgment; and because I am sensible, all such declarations are construed to be laying a sort of debt on the publick. As the former edition has been received with much indulgence, I ought to make my acknowledgments to the town for their favourable opinion of it; and I shall always be proud to think that encouragement the best payment I can hope to receive from my poor studies.*

* It appears from a letter which has been printed by Mr. Nicholls, in his *Literary Illustrations*, vol. ii. p. 77, that a considerable part of this preface was written by Warburton, as he himself informs Dr. Birch, Nov. 24, 1737. I had formerly suspected that this was the case, from internal evidence; and I was confirmed in my opinion by finding that the comparison between Jonson and Shakspeare, in p. 30, is to be found almost verbatim in a note on *Love's Labour's Lost*, with Warburton's name affixed to it. See vol. iv. p. 288, n. 4. The contemptuous mention of Mallet I have no doubt proceeded from the same pen, which may have come to the other's knowledge. This may partly account for the virulence with which that despicable hireling of Bolingbroke assailed Warburton for his defence of Pope on the subject of *The Patriot King*. BOSWELL.

SIR THOMAS HANMER'S

P R E F A C E.

WHAT the publick is here to expect is a true and correct edition of Shakspeare's works, cleared from the corruptions with which they have hitherto abounded. One of the great admirers of this incomparable author hath made it the amusement of his leisure hours for many years past to look over his writings with a careful eye, to note the obscurities and absurdities introduced into the text, and according to the best of his judgment to restore the genuine sense and purity of it. In this he proposed nothing to himself, but his private satisfaction in making his own copy as perfect as he could : but as the emendations multiplied upon his hands, other gentlemen, equally fond of the author, desired to see them, and some were so kind as to give their assistance, by communicating their observations and conjectures upon difficult passages which had occurred to them. Thus by degrees the work growing more considerable than was at first expected, they who had the opportunity of looking into it, too partial perhaps in their judgment, thought it worth being made publick ; and he, who hath with difficulty yielded to their persuasions, is far from desiring to reflect upon the late editors for the omissions and defects which they left to be supplied by others who should follow them in the same province. On the contrary, he thinks the world much obliged to them for the progress they made in weeding out so great a number of blunders and mistakes as they have done ; and probably he who hath carried on the work might never have thought of such an undertaking, if he had not found a considerable part so done to his hands.

From what causes it proceeded that the works of this author, in the first publication of them, were more in-

jured and abused than perhaps any that ever passed the press, hath been sufficiently explained in the preface to Mr. Pope's edition, which is here subjoined, and there needs no more to be said upon that subject. This only the reader is desired to bear in mind, that as the corruptions are more numerous, and of a grosser kind than can be well conceived but by those who have looked nearly into them; so in the correcting them this rule hath been most strictly observed, not to give a loose to fancy, or indulge a licentious spirit of criticism, as if it were fit for any one to presume to judge what Shakspeare ought to have written, instead of endeavouring to discover truly and retrieve what he did write: and so great caution hath been used in this respect, that no alterations have been made, but what the sense necessarily required, what the measure of the verse often helped to point out, and what the similitude of words in the false reading and in the true, generally speaking, appeared very well to justify.

Most of those passages are here thrown to the bottom of the page, and rejected as spurious, which were stigmatized as such in Mr. Pope's edition; and it were to be wished that more had then undergone the same sentence. The promoter of the present edition hath ventured to discard but few more upon his own judgment, the most considerable of which is that wretched piece of ribaldry in King Henry the Fifth, put into the mouths of the French princess and an old gentlewoman, improper enough as it is all in French, and not intelligible to an English audience, and yet that perhaps is the best thing that can be said of it. There can be no doubt but a great deal more of that low stuff, which disgraces the works of this great author, was foisted in by the players after his death, to please the vulgar audiences by which they subsisted: and though some of the poor witticisms and conceits must be supposed to have fallen from his pen, yet as he hath put them generally into the mouths of low and ignorant people, so it is to be remembered that he wrote for the stage, rude and unpolished as it then was; and the vicious taste of the age must stand condemned for them, since he hath left upon record a signal proof how much he despised them. In his play of *The Merchant of Venice*, a clown is introduced quibbling in a miserable manner; upon which one, who bears the character of a man of sense, makes the following reflection: "How every fool can play upon

a word! I think the best grace of wit will shortly turn into silence, and discourse grow commendable in none but parrots." He could hardly have found stronger words to express his indignation at those false pretences to wit then in vogue; and therefore though such trash is frequently interspersed in his writings, it would be unjust to cast it as an imputation upon his taste and judgment and character as a writer.

There being many words in Shakspeare which are grown out of use and obsolete, and many borrowed from other languages which are not enough naturalized or known among us, a glossary is added at the end of the work, for the explanation of all those terms which have hitherto been so many stumbling-blocks to the generality of readers; and where there is any obscurity in the text, not arising from the words, but from a reference to some antiquated customs now forgotten, or other causes of that kind, a note is put at the bottom of the page, to clear up the difficulty.

With these several helps, if that rich vein of sense which runs through the works of this author can be retrieved in every part, and brought to appear in its true light, and if it may be hoped, without presumption, that this is here effected; they who love and admire him will receive a new pleasure, and all probably will be more ready to join in doing him justice, who does great honour to his country as a rare and perhaps a singular genius; one who hath attained a high degree of perfection in those two great branches of poetry, tragedy and comedy, different as they are in their natures from each other; and who may be said without partiality to have equalled, if not excelled, in both kinds, the best writers of any age or country, who have thought it glory enough to distinguish themselves in either.

Since therefore other nations have taken care to dignify the works of their most celebrated poets with the fairest impressions beautified with the ornaments of sculpture, well may our Shakspeare be thought to deserve no less consideration: and as a fresh acknowledgment hath lately been paid to his merit, and a high regard to his name and memory, by erecting his statue at a publick expence; so it is desired that this new edition of his works, which hath cost some attention and care, may be looked upon as another small monument designed and dedicated to his honour.

DR. WARBURTON'S

PREFACE.

IT hath been no unusual thing for writers, when dissatisfied with the patronage or judgment of their own times, to appeal to posterity for a fair hearing. Some have even thought fit to apply to it in the first instance; and to decline acquaintance with the publick, till envy and prejudice had quite subsided. But, of all the trusters to futurity, commend me to the author of the following poems, who not only left it to time to do him justice as it would, but to find him out as it could. For, what between too great attention to his profit as a player, and too little to his reputation as a poet, his works, left to the care of door-keepers and prompters, hardly escaped the common fate of those writings, how good soever, which are abandoned to their own fortune, and unprotected by party or cabal. At length, indeed, they struggled into light; but so disguised and travested, that no classick author, after having run ten secular stages through the blind cloisters of monks and canons, ever came out in half so maimed and mangled a condition. But for a full account of his disorders, I refer the reader to the excellent discourse which follows*, and turn myself to consider the remedies that have been applied to them.

Shakspeare's works, when they escaped the players, did not fall into much better hands when they came amongst printers and booksellers; who, to say the truth, had at first but small encouragement for putting them into a better condition. The stubborn nonsense, with which he was incrusted, occasioned his lying long neglected amongst the common lumber of the stage. And when that resistless splendor, which now shoots all around him,

* Mr. Pope's preface. REED.

had, by degrees, broke through the shell of those impurities, his dazzled admirers became as suddenly insensible to the extraneous scurf that still stuck upon him, as they had been before to the native beauties that lay under it. So that, as then he was thought not to deserve a cure, he was now supposed not to need any.

His growing eminence, however, required that he should be used with ceremony; and he soon had his appointment of an editor in form. But the bookseller, whose dealing was with wits, having learnt of them, I know not what silly maxim, that "none but a poet should presume to meddle with a poet," engaged the ingenious Mr. Rowe to undertake this employment. A wit indeed he was; but so utterly unacquainted with the whole business of criticism, that he did not even collate or consult the first editions of the work he undertook to publish; but contented himself with giving us a meagre account of the author's life, interlarded with some common-place scraps from his writings. The truth is, Shakspeare's condition was yet but ill understood. The nonsense, now, by consent, received for his own, was held in a kind of reverence for its age and author; and thus it continued till another great *poet* broke the charm, by showing us, that the higher we went, the less of it was still to be found.

For the proprietors, not discouraged by their first unsuccessful effort, in due time, made a second; and, though they still stuck to their poets, with infinitely more success in their choice of Mr. Pope, who, by the mere force of an uncommon genius, without any particular study or profession of this art, discharged the great parts of it so well, as to make his edition the best foundation for all further improvements. He separated the genuine from the spurious plays; and, with equal judgment, though not always with the same success, attempted to clear the genuine plays from the interpolated scenes; he then consulted the old editions; and, by a careful collation of them, rectified the faulty, and supplied the imperfect reading, in a great number of places: and lastly, in an admirable preface, hath drawn a general, but very lively sketch of Shakspeare's poetick character; and, in the corrected text, marked out those peculiar strokes of genius which were most proper to support and illustrate that character. Thus far Mr. Pope. And although much more was to be done before Shakspeare could be restored

to himself (such as amending the corrupted text where the printed books afford no assistance; explaining his licentious phraseology and obscure allusions; and illustrating the beauties of his poetry); yet, with great modesty and prudence, our illustrious editor left this to the critick by profession.

But nothing will give the common reader a better idea of the value of Mr. Pope's edition, than the two attempts which have been since made by Mr. Theobald and Sir Thomas Hanmer in opposition to it; who, although they concerned themselves only in the first of these three parts of criticism, the restoring the text, (without any conception of the second, or venturing even to touch upon the third,) yet succeeded so very ill in it, that they left their author in ten times a worse condition than they found him. But, as it was my ill fortune to have some accidental connections with these two gentlemen, it will be incumbent on me to be a little more particular concerning them.

The one was recommended to me as a poor man; the other as a poor critick: and to each of them, at different times, I communicated a great number of observations, which they managed, as they saw fit, to the relief of their several distresses. As to Mr. Theobald, who wanted money, I allowed him to print what I gave him for his own advantage; and he allowed himself in the liberty of taking one part for his own, and sequestering another for the benefit, as I supposed, of some future edition. But, as to the Oxford editor, who wanted nothing but what he might very well be without, the reputation of a critick, I could not so easily forgive him for trafficking with my papers, without my knowledge; and, when that project failed, for employing a number of my conjectures in his edition against my express desire not to have that honour done unto me.

Mr. Theobald was naturally turned to industry and labour. What he read he could transcribe: but, as what he thought, if ever he did think, he could but ill express, so he read on: and by that means got a character of learning, without risking, to every observer, the imputation of wanting a better talent. By a punctilious collation of the old books, he corrected what was manifestly wrong in the latter editions, by what was manifestly right in the earlier. And this is his real merit; and the whole of it.

For where the phrase was very obsolete or licentious in the common books, or only slightly corrupted in the other, he wanted sufficient knowledge of the progress and various stages of the English tongue, as well as acquaintance with the peculiarity of Shakspeare's language, to understand what was right; nor had he either common judgment to see, or critical sagacity to amend, what was manifestly faulty. Hence he generally exerts his conjectural talent in the wrong place: he tampers with what is found in the common books; and, in the old ones, omits all notice of variations, the sense of which he did not understand.

How the Oxford editor came to think himself qualified for this office, from which his whole course of life had been so remote, is still more difficult to conceive. For whatever parts he might have either of genius or erudition, he was absolutely ignorant of the art of criticism, as well as of the poetry of that time, and the language of his author. And so far from a thought of examining the *first* editions, that he even neglected to compare Mr. Pope's, from which he printed his own, with Mr. Theobald's; whereby he lost the advantage of many fine lines, which the other had recovered from the old quartos. Where he trusts to his own sagacity, in what affects the sense, his conjectures are generally absurd and extravagant, and violating every rule of criticism. Though, in this rage of correcting, he was not absolutely destitute of all *art*. For, having a number of my conjectures before him, he took as many of them as he saw fit, to work upon; and by changing them to something, he thought, synonymous or similar, he made them his own; and so became a critick at a cheap expence. But how well he hath succeeded in this, as likewise in his conjectures, which are properly his own, will be seen in the course of my remarks; though, as he hath declined to give the reasons for his interpolations, he hath not afforded me so fair a hold of him as Mr. Theobald hath done, who was less cautious. But his principal object was to reform his author's numbers; and this, which he hath done, on every occasion, by the insertion or omission of a set of harmless unconcerning expletives, makes up the gross body of his innocent corrections. And so, in spite of that extreme negligence in numbers, which distinguishes the first dramattick writers, he hath tricked up the old bard, from head to foot, in

all the finical exactness of a modern measurer of syllables.

For the rest, all the corrections, which these two editors have made on any reasonable foundation, are here admitted into the text; and carefully assigned to their respective authors: a piece of justice which the Oxford editor never did; and which the other was not always scrupulous in observing towards me. To conclude with them in a word, they separately possessed those two qualities which, more than any other, have contributed to bring the art of criticism into disrepute, dulness of apprehension, and extravagance of conjecture.

I am now to give some account of the present undertaking. For as to all those things which have been published under the titles of Essays, Remarks, Observations, &c. on Shakspeare, (if you except some critical notes on Macbeth,* given as a specimen of a projected edition, and written, as appears, by a man of parts and genius,) the rest are absolutely below a serious notice.

The whole a critick can do for an author, who deserves his service, is to correct the faulty text; to remark the peculiarities of language; to illustrate the obscure allusions; and to explain the beauties and defects of sentiment or composition. And surely, if ever author had a claim to this service, it was our Shakspeare; who, widely excelling in the knowledge of human nature, hath given to his infinitely varied pictures of it, such truth of design, such force of drawing, such beauty of colouring, as was hardly ever equalled by any writer, whether his aim was the use, or only the entertainment of mankind. The notes in this edition, therefore, take in the whole compass of criticism.

I. The first sort is employed in restoring the poet's genuine text; but in those places only where it labours with inextricable nonsense. In which, how much soever I may have given scope to critical conjecture, where the old copies failed me, I have indulged nothing to fancy or imagination; but have religiously observed the severe canons of literal criticism, as may be seen from the reasons accompanying every alteration of the common text. Nor would a different conduct have become a critick, whose greatest attention, in this part, was to vindicate the

* Published in 1745, by Dr. Johnson. REED.

established reading from interpolations occasioned by the fanciful extravagancies of others. I once intended to have given the reader a body of canons, for literal criticism, drawn out in form; as well such as concern the art in general, as those that arise from the nature and circumstances of our author's works in particular. And this for two reasons. First, to give the unlearned reader a just idea, and consequently a better opinion of the art of criticism, now sunk very low in the popular esteem, by the attempts of some who would needs exercise it without either natural or acquired talents; and by the ill success of others, who seemed to have lost both, when they came to try them upon English authors. Secondly, To deter the unlearned writer from wantonly trifling with an art he is a stranger to, at the expence of his own reputation, and the integrity of the text of established authors. But these uses may be well supplied by what is occasionally said upon the subject, in the course of the following remarks.

II. The second sort of notes consists in an explanation of the author's meaning, when by one or more of these causes it becomes obscure; either from a licentious use of terms, or a hard or ungrammatical construction; or lastly, from far-fetched or quaint allusions.

1. This licentious use of words is almost peculiar to the language of Shakspeare. To common terms he hath affixed meanings of his own, unauthorized by use, and not to be justified by analogy. And this liberty he hath taken with the noblest parts of speech, such as mixed modes; which, as they are most susceptible of abuse, so their abuse much hurts the clearness of the discourse. The criticks (to whom Shakspeare's licence was still as much a secret as his meaning which that licence had obscured) fell into two contrary mistakes; but equally injurious to his reputation and his writings. For some of them, observing a darkness that pervaded his whole expression, have censured him for confusion of ideas and inaccuracy of reasoning. "In the neighing of a horse," says Rymer, "or in the growling of a mastiff, there is a meaning, there is a lively expression, and, may I say, more humanity than many times in the tragical flights of Shakspeare." The ignorance of which censure is of a piece with its brutality. The truth is, no one thought clearer, or argued more closely, than this immortal bard. But his superiority of

genius less needing the intervention of words in the act of thinking, when he came to draw out his contemplations into discourse, he took up (as he was hurried on by the torrent of his matter) with the first words that lay in his way ; and if, amongst these, there were two mixed modes that had but a principal idea in common, it was enough for him ; he regarded them as synonymous, and would use the one for the other without fear or scruple.—Again, there have been others, such as the two last editors, who have fallen into a contrary extreme ; and regarded Shakspeare's anomalies (as we may call them) amongst the corruptions of his text ; which, therefore, they have cashiered in great numbers, to make room for a jargon of their own. This hath put me to additional trouble ; for I had not only their interpolations to throw out again, but the genuine text to replace, and establish in its stead ; which, in many cases, could not be done without showing the peculiar sense of the terms, and explaining the causes which led the poet to so perverse a use of them. I had it once, indeed, in my design, to give a general alphabetick glossary of those terms ; but as each of them is explained in its proper place, there seemed the less occasion for such an index.

2. The poet's hard and unnatural construction had a different original. This was the effect of mistaken art and design. The publick taste was in its infancy ; and delighted (as it always does during that state) in the high and turgid ; which leads the writer to disguise a vulgar expression with hard and forced construction, whereby the sentence frequently becomes cloudy and dark. Here his criticks show their modesty, and leave him to himself. For the arbitrary change of a word doth little towards dispelling an obscurity that ariseth, not from the licentious use of a single term, but from the unnatural arrangement of a whole sentence. And they risked nothing by their silence. For Shakspeare was too clear in fame to be suspected of a want of meaning ; and too high in fashion for any one to own he needed a critick to find it out. Not but, in his best works, we must allow, he is often so natural and flowing, so pure and correct, that he is even a model for style and language.

3. As to his far-fetched and quaint allusions, these are often a cover to common thoughts ; just as his hard construction is to common expression. When they are not

so, the explanation of them has this further advantage, that, in clearing the obscurity, you frequently discover some latent conceit not unworthy of his genius.

III. The third and last sort of notes is concerned in a critical explanation of the author's beauties and defects; but chiefly of his beauties, whether in style, thought, sentiment, character, or composition. An odd humour of finding fault hath long prevailed amongst the criticks; as if nothing were worth remarking, that did not, at the same time, deserve to be reprov'd. Whereas the publick judgment hath less need to be assisted in what it shall reject, than in what it ought to prize; men being generally more ready at spying faults than in discovering beauties. Nor is the value they set upon a work, a certain proof that they understand it. For it is ever seen, that half a dozen voices of credit give the lead: and if the publick chance to be in good humour, or the author much in their favour, the people are sure to follow. Hence it is that the true critick hath so frequently attached himself to works of established reputation; not to teach the world to admire, which, in those circumstances, to say the truth, they are apt enough to do of themselves; but to teach them how, with reason to admire: no easy matter, I will assure you, on the subject in question: for though it be very true, as Mr. Pope hath observed, that "Shakspeare is the fairest and fullest subject for criticism," yet it is not such a sort of criticism as may be raised mechanically on the rules which Dacier, Rapin, and Bossu, have collected from antiquity; and of which, such kind of writers as Rymer, Gildon, Dennis, and Oldmixon, have only gathered and chewed the husks: nor on the other hand is it to be formed on the plan of those crude and superficial judgments, on books and things, with which a certain celebrated paper* so much abounds; too good indeed to be named with the writers last mentioned, but being unluckily mistaken for a model, because it was an original, it hath given rise to a deluge of the worst sort of critical jargon; I mean that which looks most like sense. But the kind of criticism here required, is such as judgeth our author by those only laws and principles on which he wrote, Nature, and Common-sense.

Our observations, therefore, being thus extensive, will,

* The Spectator. REED.

I presume, enable the reader to form a right judgment of this favourite poet, without drawing out his character, as was once intended, in a continued discourse.

These, such as they are, were among my younger amusements, when, many years ago, I used to turn over these sort of writers to unbend myself from more serious applications: and what certainly the publick at this time of day had never been troubled with, but for the conduct of the two last editors, and the persuasions of dear Mr. Pope; whose memory and name,

—semper acerbum,
Semper honoratum (sic Di voluistis) habebō.

He was desirous I should give a new edition of this poet, as he thought it might contribute to put a stop to a prevailing folly of altering the text of celebrated authors without talents or judgment. And he was willing that his edition should be melted down into mine, as it would, he said, afford him (so great is the modesty of an ingenuous temper) a fit opportunity of confessing his mistakes.* In memory of our friendship, I have, therefore, made it our joint edition. His admirable preface is here added; all his notes are given, with his name annexed; the scenes are divided according to his regulation; and the most beautiful passages distinguished, as in his book, with inverted commas. In imitation of him, I have done the same by as many others as I thought most deserving of the reader's attention, and have marked them with *double* commas.

If, from all this, Shakspeare or good letters have received any advantage, and the publick any benefit, or entertainment, the thanks are due to the proprietors, who have been at the expence of procuring this edition. And I should be unjust to several deserving men of a reputable and useful profession, if I did not, on this occasion, acknowledge the fair dealing I have always found amongst them; and profess my sense of the unjust prejudice which lies against them; whereby they have been, hitherto, unable to procure that security for their property, which they see the rest of their fellow-citizens enjoy. A prejudice in part arising from the frequent piracies (as they are called) committed by members of their own body,

* See his Letters to me.

But such kind of members no body is without. And it would be hard that this should be turned to the discredit of the honest part of the profession, who suffer more from such injuries than any other men. It hath, in part too, arisen from the clamours of profligate scribblers, ever ready, for a piece of money, to prostitute their bad sense for or against any cause profane or sacred; or in any scandal publick or private: these meeting with little encouragement from men of account in the trade (who, even in this enlightened age, are not the very worst judges or rewarders of merit,) apply themselves to people of condition; and support their importunities by false complaints against booksellers.

But I should now, perhaps, rather think of my own apology, than busy myself in the defence of others. I shall have some *Tartuffe* ready, on the first appearance of this edition, to call out again, and tell me, that "I suffer myself to be wholly diverted from my purpose by these matters less suitable to my clerical profession." "Well, but (says a friend) why not take so candid an intimation in good part? Withdraw yourself again, as you are bid, into the clerical pale; examine the records of sacred and profane antiquity; and, on them, erect a work to the confusion of infidelity." Why, I have done all this, and more: and hear now what the same men have said to it. They tell me, "I have wrote to the wrong and injury of religion, and furnished out more handles for unbelievers." "Oh! now the secret is out; and you may have your pardon, I find, upon easier terms. It is only to write no more."—Good gentlemen! and shall I not oblige them? They would gladly obstruct my way to those things which every man, who endeavours well in his profession, must needs think he has some claim to, when he sees them given to those who never did endeavour; at the same time that they would deter me from taking those advantages which letters enable me to procure for myself. If then I am to write no more (though as much out of my profession as they may please to represent this work, I suspect their modesty would not insist on a scrutiny of our several applications of this profane profit and their purer gains,) if, I say, I am to write no more, let me at least give the publick, who have a better pretence to demand it of me, some reason for my presenting them with these amusements: which, if I am not much mistaken, may

be excused by the best and fairest examples; and, what is more, may be justified on the surer reason of things.

The great Saint Chrysostom, a name consecrated to immortality by his virtue and eloquence, is known to have been so fond of Aristophanes, as to wake with him at his studies, and to sleep with him under his pillow: and I never heard that this was objected either to his piety or his preaching, not even in those times of pure zeal and primitive religion. Yet, in respect of Shakspeare's great sense, Aristophanes's best wit is but buffoonery; and, in comparison of Aristophanes's freedoms, Shakspeare writes with the purity of a vestal. But they will say, St. Chrysostom contracted a fondness for the comick poet *for the sake of his Greek*. To this, indeed, I have nothing to reply. Far be it from me to insinuate so unscholar-like a thing, as if we had the same use for good English, that a Greek had for his Attick elegance. Critick Kuster, in a taste and language peculiar to grammarians of a certain order, hath decreed, that "the history and chronology of Greek words is the most *solid* entertainment of a man of letters."

I fly then to a higher example, much nearer home, and still more in point, the famous university of Oxford. This illustrious body, which hath long so justly held, and with such equity dispensed the chief honours of the learned world, thought good letters so much interested in correct editions of the best English writers, that they, very lately, in their publick capacity, undertook one of this very author by subscription. And if the editor hath not discharged his task with suitable abilities for one so much honoured by them, this was not their fault, but his, who thrust himself into the employment. After such an example, it would be weakening any defence to seek further for authorities. All that can be now decently urged, is the reason of the thing; and this I shall do, more for the sake of that truly venerable body than my own.

Of all the literary exercitations of speculative men, whether designed for the use or entertainment of the world, there are none of so much importance or what are more our immediate concern, than those which let us into the knowledge of our nature. Others may exercise the reason, or amuse the imagination; but these only can improve the heart, and form the human mind to wisdom.

Now, in this science, our Shakspeare is confessed to occupy the foremost place; whether we consider the amazing sagacity with which he investigates every hidden spring and wheel of human action; or his happy manner of communicating this knowledge, in the just and living paintings which he has given us of all our passions, appetites, and pursuits. These afford a lesson which can never be too often repeated, or too constantly inculcated; and, to engage the reader's due attention to it, hath been one of the principal objects of this edition.

As this science (whatever profound philosophers may think) is, to the rest, *in things*; so, *in words*, (whatever supercilious pedants may talk) every one's mother tongue is to all other languages. This hath still been the sentiment of nature and true wisdom. Hence, the greatest men of antiquity never thought themselves better employed, than in cultivating their own country idiom. So, Lycurgus did honour to Sparta, in giving the first complete edition of Homer; and Cicero to Rome, in correcting the works of Lucretius. Nor do we want examples of the same good sense in modern times, even amidst the cruel inroads that art and fashion have made upon nature and the simplicity of wisdom. Menage, the greatest name in France for all kinds of philologick learning, prided himself in writing critical notes on their best lyrick poet Malherbe: and our greater Selden, when he thought it might reflect credit on his country, did not disdain even to comment a very ordinary poet, one Michael Drayton*. But the English tongue, at this juncture, deserves and demands our particular regard. It hath, by means of the many excellent works of different kinds

* — our great Selden, when he thought he might reflect credit on his country, did not disdain to comment a VERY ORDINARY POET, ONE MICHAEL DRAYTON.] This compliment to himself for condescending to write notes on Shakspeare, Warburton copied from Pope, who sacrificed Drayton to gratify the vanity of this flattering editor: "I have a particular reason (says Pope in a letter to Warburton) to make you interest yourself in me and my writings. It will cause both them and me to make a better figure to posterity. *A very mediocre poet, one Drayton, is yet taken notice of because Selden writ a few notes on one of his poems.*"

Pope's Works, vol. ix. p. 350, 8vo. 1751. HOLT WHITE.

composed in it, engaged the notice, and become the study, of almost every curious and learned foreigner, so as to be thought even a part of literary accomplishment. This must needs make it deserving of a critical attention: and its being yet destitute of a test or standard to apply to, in cases of doubt or difficulty, shows how much it wants that attention. For we have neither Grammar nor Dictionary, neither chart nor compass, to guide us through this wide sea of words. And indeed how should we? since both are to be composed and finished on the authority of our best established writers. But their authority can be of little use, till the text hath been correctly settled, and the phraseology critically examined. As, then, by these aids, a Grammar and Dictionary, planned upon the best rules of logick and philosophy (and none but such will deserve the name), are to be procured; the forwarding of this will be a general concern: for, as Quintilian observes, "*Verborum proprietas ac differentia omnibus, qui sermonem curæ habent, debet esse communis.*" By this way, the Italians have brought their tongue to a degree of purity and stability, which no living language ever attained unto before. It is with pleasure I observe, that these things now begin to be understood among ourselves; and that I can acquaint the publick, we may soon expect very elegant editions of Fletcher and Milton's *Paradise Lost*, from gentlemen of distinguished abilities and learning. But this interval of good sense, as it may be short, is indeed but new. For I remember to have heard of a very learned man, who, not long since, formed a design, of giving a more correct edition of Spenser: and, without doubt, would have performed it well; but he was dissuaded from his purpose by his friends, as beneath the dignity of a professor of the occult sciences. Yet these very friends, I suppose, would have thought it added lustre to his high station, to have new-furbished out some dull northern chronicle, or dark Sibylline ænigma. But let it not be thought that what is here said insinuates any thing to the discredit of Greek and Latin criticism. If the follies of particular men were sufficient to bring any branch of learning into disrepute, I do not know any that would stand in a worse situation than that for which I now apologize. For I hardly think there ever appeared, in any learned language, so execrable a heap of nonsense, under

the name of commentaries, as hath been lately given us on a certain satyrick poet, of the last age, by his editor and coadjutor*.

I am sensible how unjustly the very best classical criticks have been treated. It is said, that our great philosopher† spoke with much contempt of the two finest scholars of this age, Dr. Bentley and Bishop Hare, for squabbling, as he expressed it, about an old play-book; meaning, I suppose, Terence's comedies. But this story is unworthy of him; though well enough suiting the fanatic turn of the wild writer that relates it; such censures are amongst the follies of men immoderately given over to one science, and ignorantly undervaluing all the rest. Those learned criticks might, and perhaps did, laugh in their turn (though still, sure, with the same indecency and indiscretion,) at that incomparable man, for wearing out a long life in poring through a telescope. Indeed, the weaknesses of such are to be mentioned with reverence. But who can bear, without indignation, the fashionable cant of every trifling writer, whose insipidity passes, with himself, for politeness, for pretending to be shocked, forsooth, with the rude and savage air of *vulgar* criticks; meaning such as Muretus, Scaliger, Casaubon, Salmasius, Spanheim, Bentley! When, had it not been for the deathless labours of such as these, the western world, at the revival of letters, had soon fallen back again into a state of ignorance and barbarity, as deplorable as that from which Providence had just redeemed it.

To conclude with an observation of a fine writer and great philosopher of our own; which I would gladly bind, though with all honour, as a phylactery, on the brow of every awful grammarian, to teach him at once the use and limits of his art: "Words are the money of fools, and the counters of wise men."

* This alludes to Dr. Grey's edition of *Hudibras* published in 1744. REED.

† Sir Isaac Newton. See Whiston's *Historical Memoirs of the Life of Dr. Clarke*, 1748, 8vo. p. 113. REED.

DR. JOHNSON'S

P R E F A C E*.

THAT praises are without reason lavished on the dead, and that the honours due only to excellence are paid to antiquity, is a complaint likely to be always continued by those, who, being able to add nothing to truth, hope for eminence from the heresies of paradox ; or those, who, being forced by disappointment upon consolatory expedients, are willing to hope from posterity what the present age refuses, and flatter themselves that the regard which is yet denied by envy, will be at last bestowed by time.

Antiquity, like every other quality that attracts the notice of mankind, has undoubtedly votaries that reverence it, not from reason, but from prejudice. Some seem to admire indiscriminately whatever has been long preserved, without considering that time has sometimes co-operated with chance ; all perhaps are more willing to honour past than present excellence ; and the mind contemplates genius through the shades of age, as the eye surveys the sun through artificial opacity. The great contention of criticism is to find the faults of the moderns, and the beauties of the ancients. While an author is yet living, we estimate his powers by his worst performance ; and when he is dead, we rate them by his best.

To works, however, of which the excellence is not absolute and definite, but gradual and comparative ; to works not raised upon principles demonstrative and scientific, but appealing wholly to observation and experience, no other test can be applied than length of duration and continuance of esteem. What mankind have long possessed they have often examined and compared, and if they persist to value the possession, it is because frequent

* First printed in 1765.

comparisons have confirmed opinion in its favour. As among the works of nature no man can properly call a river deep, or a mountain high, without the knowledge of many mountains, and many rivers; so in the production of genius, nothing can be styled excellent till it has been compared with other works of the same kind. Demonstration immediately displays its power, and has nothing to hope or fear from the flux of years; but works tentative and experimental must be estimated by their proportion to the general and collective ability of man, as it is discovered in a long succession of endeavours. Of the first building that was raised, it might be with certainty determined that it was round or square; but whether it was spacious or lofty must have been referred to time. The Pythagorean scale of numbers was at once discovered to be perfect; but the poems of Homer we yet know not to transcend the common limits of human intelligence, but by remarking, that nation after nation, and century after century, has been able to do little more than transpose his incidents, new name his characters, and paraphrase his sentiments.

The reverence due to writings that have long subsisted arises therefore not from any credulous confidence in the superior wisdom of past ages, or gloomy persuasion of the degeneracy of mankind, but is the consequence of acknowledged indubitable positions, that what has been longest known has been most considered, and what is most considered is best understood.

The poet, of whose works I have undertaken the revision, may now begin to assume the dignity of an ancient, and claim the privilege of an established fame and prescriptive veneration. He has long outlived his century,* the term commonly fixed as the test of literary merit. Whatever advantages he might once derive from personal allusions, local customs, or temporary opinions, have for many years been lost; and every topick of merriment or motive of sorrow, which the modes of artificial life afforded him, now only obscure the scenes which they once illuminated. The effects of favour and competition are at an end; the tradition of his friendships and his enmities has perished; his works support no opinion with argu-

* Est vetus atque probus, centum qui perficit annos. *Hor.*

STEEVENS.

ments, nor supply any faction with invectives; they can neither indulge vanity, nor gratify malignity; but are read without any other reason than the desire of pleasure, and are therefore praised only as pleasure is obtained; yet, thus unassisted by interest or passion, they have past through variations of taste and changes of manners, and, as they devolved from one generation to another, have received new honours at every transmission.

But because human judgment, though it be gradually gaining upon certainty, never becomes infallible; and approbation, though long continued, may yet be only the approbation of prejudice or fashion; it is proper to inquire, by what peculiarities of excellence Shakspeare has gained and kept the favour of his countrymen.

Nothing can please many, and please long, but just representations of general nature. Particular manners can be known to few, and therefore few only can judge how nearly they are copied. The irregular combinations of fanciful invention may delight awhile, by that novelty of which the common satiety of life sends us all in quest; the pleasures of sudden wonder are soon exhausted, and the mind can only repose on the stability of truth.

Shakspeare is above all writers, at least above all modern writers, the poet of nature; the poet that holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life. His characters are not modified by the customs of particular places, unpractised by the rest of the world: by the peculiarities of studies or professions, which can operate but upon small numbers; or by the accidents of transient fashions or temporary opinions: they are the genuine progeny of common humanity, such as the world will always supply, and observation will always find. His persons act and speak by the influence of those general passions and principles by which all minds are agitated, and the whole system of life is continued in motion. In the writings of other poets a character is too often an individual: in those of Shakspeare it is commonly a species.

It is from this wide extension of design that so much instruction is derived. It is this which fills the plays of Shakspeare with practical axioms and domestick wisdom. It was said of Euripides, that every verse was a precept; and it may be said of Shakspeare, that from his works may be collected a system of civil and œconomical prudence. Yet his real power is not shown in the splendour

of particular passages, but by the progress of his fable, and the tenour of his dialogue; and he that tries to recommend him by select quotations, will succeed like the pedant in Hierocles, who, when he offered his house to sale, carried a brick in his pocket as a specimen.

It will not easily be imagined how much Shakspeare excels in accommodating his sentiments to real life, but by comparing him with other authors. It was observed of the ancient schools of declamation, that the more diligently they were frequented, the more was the student disqualified for the world, because he found nothing there which he should ever meet in any other place. The same remark may be applied to every stage but that of Shakspeare. The theatre, when it is under any other direction, is peopled by such characters as were never seen, conversing in a language which was never heard, upon topics which will never arise in the commerce of mankind. But the dialogue of this author is often so evidently determined by the incident which produces it, and is pursued with so much ease and simplicity, that it seems scarcely to claim the merit of fiction, but to have been gleaned by diligent selection out of common conversation, and common occurrences.

Upon every other stage the universal agent is love, by whose power all good and evil is distributed, and every action quickened or retarded. To bring a lover, a lady, and a rival into the fable; to entangle them in contradictory obligations, perplex them with oppositions of interest, and harass them with violence of desires inconsistent with each other; to make them meet in rapture, and part in agony; to fill their mouths with hyperbolical joy and outrageous sorrow; to distress them as nothing human ever was distressed; to deliver them as nothing human ever was delivered, is the business of a modern dramatist. For this, probability is violated, life is misrepresented, and language is depraved. But love is only one of many passions, and as it has no great influence upon the sum of life, it has little operation in the dramas of a poet, who caught his ideas from the living world, and exhibited only what he saw before him. He knew, that any other passion, as it was regular or exorbitant, was a cause of happiness or calamity.

Characters thus ample and general were not easily discriminated and preserved, yet perhaps no poet ever kept

his personages more distinct from each other. I will not say with Pope, that every speech may be assigned to the proper speaker, because many speeches there are which have nothing characteristical; but, perhaps, though some may be equally adapted to every person, it will be difficult to find any that can be properly transferred from the present possessor to another claimant. The choice is right, when there is reason for choice.

Other dramatists can only gain attention by hyperbolical or aggravated characters, by fabulous and unexampled excellence or depravity, as the writers of barbarous romances invigorated the reader by a giant and a dwarf; and he that should form his expectation of human affairs from the play, or from the tale, would be equally deceived. Shakspeare has no heroes; his scenes are occupied only by men, who act and speak as the reader thinks that he should himself have spoken or acted on the same occasion: even where the agency is super-natural, the dialogue is level with life. Other writers disguise the most natural passions and most frequent incidents; so that he who contemplates them in the book will not know them in the world: Shakspeare approximates the remote, and familiarizes the wonderful; the event which he represents will not happen, but if it were possible, its effects would probably be such as he has assigned*; and it may be said, that he has not only shown human nature as it acts in real exigencies, but as it would be found in trials, to which it cannot be exposed.

This therefore is the praise of Shakspeare, that his drama is the mirror of life; that he who has mazed his imagination, in following the phantoms which other writers raise up before him, may here be cured of his delirious ecstasies, by reading human sentiments in human language; by scenes from which a hermit may estimate the transactions of the world, and a confessor predict the progress of the passions.

His adherence to general nature has exposed him to the censure of criticks, who form their judgments upon narrower principles. Dennis and Rymer think his Romans not sufficiently Roman; and Voltaire censures his kings

* Quærit quod nusquam est gentium, reperit tamen,
Facit illud verisimile quod mendacium est.

Plauti. Pseudolus, Act I. Sc. IV. STEEVENS.

as not completely royal. Dennis is offended, that Menenius a senator of Rome, should play the buffoon; and Voltaire perhaps thinks decency violated when the Danish usurper is represented as a drunkard. But Shakspeare always makes nature predominate over accident; and if he preserves the essential character, is not very careful of distinctions superinduced and adventitious. His story requires Romans or kings, but he thinks only on men. He knew that Rome, like every other city, had men of all dispositions; and wanting a buffoon, he went into the senate-house for that which the senate-house would certainly have afforded him. He was inclined to show an usurper and a murderer not only odious, but despicable; he therefore added drunkenness to his other qualities, knowing that kings love wine like other men, and that wine exerts its natural power upon kings. These are the petty cavils of petty minds; a poet overlooks the casual distinction of country and condition, as a painter, satisfied with the figure, neglects the drapery.

The censure which he has incurred by mixing comick and tragick scenes, as it extends to all his works, deserves more consideration. Let the fact be first stated, and then examined.

Shakspeare's plays are not in the rigorous and critical sense either tragedies or comedies, but compositions of a distinct kind; exhibiting the real state of sublunary nature, which partakes of good and evil, joy and sorrow, mingled with endless variety of proportion and innumerable modes of combination; and expressing the course of the world, in which the loss of one is the gain of another; in which, at the same time, the reveller is hasting to his wine, and the mourner burying his friend; in which the malignity of one is sometimes defeated by the frolick of another; and many mischiefs and many benefits are done and hindered without design.

Out of this chaos of mingled purposes and casualties, the ancient poets, according to the laws which custom had prescribed, selected some the crimes of men, and some their absurdities: some the momentous vicissitudes of life, and some the lighter occurrences; some the terrors of distress, and some the gayeties of prosperity. Thus rose the two modes of imitation, known by the names of *tragedy* and *comedy*, compositions intended to promote different ends by contrary means, and considered as so

little allied, that I do not recollect among the Greeks or Romans a single writer who attempted both.*

* From this remark it appears, that Dr. Johnson was unacquainted with the Cyclops of Euripides.

It may, however, be observed, that Dr. Johnson, perhaps, was misled by the following passage in Dryden's Essay on Dramatick Poesy: "Tragedies and Comedies were not writ then as they are now, promiscuously, by the same person; but he who found his genius bending to the one, never attempted the other way. This is so plain, that I need not instance to you that Aristophanes, Plautus, Terence, never any of them writ a tragedy; Æschylus, Euripides, Sophocles, and Seneca, never meddled with comedy: the sock and buskin were not worn by the same poet." And yet, to show the uncertain state of Dryden's memory, in his Dedication to his Juvenal he has expended at least a page in describing the Cyclops of Euripides.

So intimately connected with this subject are the following remarks of Mr. Twining in his excellent commentary on the Poetick of Aristotle, that they ought not to be withheld from our readers.

"The prejudiced admirers of the ancients are very angry at the least insinuation that *they* had any idea of our barbarous tragi-comedy. But, after all, it cannot be dissembled, that, if they had not the *name*, they had the *thing*, or something very nearly approaching to it. If that be tragi-comedy, which is partly serious and partly comical, I do not know why we should scruple to say, that the Alcestis of Euripides is, *to all intents and purposes*, a tragi-comedy. I have not the least doubt, that it had upon an Athenian audience the proper *effect* of tragi-comedy; that is, that in some places it made them cry, and in others, laugh. And the best thing we have to hope, for the credit of Euripides, is, that he *intended* to produce this effect. For though he may be an unskilful poet, who *purposes* to write a tragi-comedy, *he* surely is a more unskilful poet, who writes one without knowing it.

"The learned reader will understand me to allude particularly to the scene, in which the domestick describes the behaviour of Hercules; and to the speech of Hercules himself, which follows. Nothing can well be of a more comick cast than the servant's complaint. He describes the hero as the most greedy and ill-mannered guest he had ever attended, under his master's hospitable roof; calling about him, eating, drinking, and *singing, in a room by himself*, while the master and all the family were in the height of funereal lamentation. He was not contented with such refreshments as had been set before him:

— στι σωφρονως ἐδεξατο
Τα προστυχοντα ξενια —
Αλλ' ἐι τι μη φεροιμεν, ΩΤΡΥΝΕΝ φερειν.

Shakspeare has united the powers of exciting laughter and sorrow not only in one mind, but in one composition.

Then he drinks—

Ἔως ἐθερμην' αὐτον ἀμφιβάσα φλοξ
Οἶνε·—————

—crowns himself with myrtle, and sings, ΑΜΟΥΣ' ΥΛΑΚΤΩΝ
—and all this, alone. “Cette description,” says Fontenelle, ‘est si burlesque, qu’on diroit d’un crocheteur qui est de confrairie.’ A censure somewhat justified by Euripides himself, who makes the servant take Hercules for a *thief*:

————— πανεργον ΚΛΩΠΙΑ και ΛΗΙΣΤΗΝ τινα.

“The speech of Hercules, φιλοσοφῆντος ἐν μεθῃ, as the scholiast observes (v. 776,) ‘philosophizing in his cups,’ is still more curious. It is, indeed, full of the φλοξ οἶνε, and completely justifies the attendant’s description. Nothing can be more *jolly*. It is in the true spirit of a modern drinking song; recommending it to the servant to uncloud his brow, enjoy the present hour, think nothing of the morrow, and drown his cares in *love* and *wine*:

ὍΥΤΟΣ——τι σεμνον και πεφροντικῶ βλέπεις;
Ου χρη σκυθρωπον, κ. τ. αλ.

—————
ΔΕΥΡ' ἘΛΘ', ὅπως ἂν και σοφωτερος γενῇ.
Τα θνητα πραγματ' οἶδας ἣν ἔχει φύσιν;
ΟΙΜΑΙ μὲν ὍΤ' ΠΟΘΕΝ ΓΑΡ;—ἀλλ' ἀκνε μὲ.
Βροτοῖς ἀπασι κατθανεῖν ὀφείλεται,
Κακ ἔστι θνητῶν ὅστις ἐξέπιξεται
Τὴν αὐριον μελλῆσαν εἰ βιωσεται.

—————
Εὐφρανε σαυτον ΠΙΝΕ!—τον καθ' ἡμεραν
Βιον λογίζε σον, τα δ' ἄλλα, τῆς τύχης.
Τίμα δὲ και τὴν πλειστον ἡδίστην θεων

ΚΥΠΡΙΝ βροτοῖσιν—— κ. τ. λ. V. 783—128.

“If any man can read this, without supposing it to have *set* the audience in a *roar*, I certainly cannot demonstrate that he is mistaken. I can only say, that I think he must be a very grave man himself, and must forget that the Athenians were not a very grave people. The zeal of Pere Brumoy in defending this tragedy, betrays him into a little indiscretion. He says, ‘tout cela à fait penser à quelques critiques modernes que cette piece etoit une tragi-comedie; chimere inconnu aux anciens. Cette piece est du gout des autres tragedies antiques.’ Indeed they, who call this play a tragi-comedy, give it rather a favourable name; for,

Almost all his plays are divided between serious and ludicrous characters, and, in the successive evolutions of the

in the scenes alluded to, it is, in fact, of a lower species than our tragi-comedy: it is rather *burlesque tragedy*; what Demetrius calls τραγωδία παιζουσα. Much of the comick cast prevails in other scenes; though mixed with those genuine strokes of simple and universal nature, which abound in this poet, and which I should be sorry to exchange for that monotonous and unaffecting level of tragick dignity, which never falls, and never rises.

"I will only mention one more instance of this tragi-comick mixture, and that from Sophocles. The dialogue between Minerva and Ulysses, in the first scene of the Ajax, from v. 74 to 88, is perfectly ludicrous. The cowardice of Ulysses is almost as comick as the cowardice of Falstaff. In spite of the presence of Minerva, and her previous assurance that she would effectually guard him from all danger by rendering him invisible, when she calls Ajax out, Ulysses, in the utmost trepidation, exclaims—

Τι δρας, Αθανα; μηδαμως σφ' έξω καλει.

" 'What are you about, Minerva?—by no means call him out.' Minerva answers—

Ου σιγ' άνεξη, μηδε δειλιαν αρεις;

" 'Will you not be silent, and lay aside your fears?' But Ulysses cannot conquer his fears:—

ΜΗ, ΠΡΟΣ ΘΕΩΝ——άλλ' ένδον άρκειτω μενων.

" 'Don't call him out, for heaven's sake:—let him stay within.' And in this tone the conversation continues; till, upon Minerva's repeating her promise that Ajax should not see him, he consents to stay; but in a line of most comical reluctance, and with an *aside*, that is in the true spirit of Sancho Pança:—

Μενοιμ' άν' ΗΘΕΛΟΝ Δ'ΑΝ ΕΚΤΟΣ ΩΝ ΤΥΧΕΙΝ.

" 'I'll stay—(*aside*) but I wish I was not here.'

'J'avoue,' says Brumoy, 'que ce trait n'est pas à la louange d'Ulysse, ni de Sophocle.'

"No unprejudiced person, I think, can read this scene without being convinced, not only, that it must actually have produced, but that it must have been *intended* to produce, the effect of comedy.

"It appears indeed to me, that we may plainly trace in the Greek tragedy, with all its improvements, and all its beauties, pretty strong marks of its popular and *tragi-comick* origin. For τραγωδία, we are told, was, originally, the only dramatick appellation; and when, afterwards, the *ludicrous* was separated from the *serious*, and distinguished by its appropriated name of *Comedy*, the separation seems to have been imperfectly made, and *Tragedy*, distinctively so called, still seems to have retained a tinc-

design, sometimes produce seriousness and sorrow, and sometimes levity and laughter.

That this is a practice contrary to the rules of criticism will be readily allowed; but there is always an appeal open from criticism to nature. The end of writing is to instruct; the end of poetry is to instruct by pleasing. That the mingled drama may convey all the instruction of tragedy or comedy cannot be denied, because it includes both in its alternations of exhibition, and approaches nearer than either to the appearance of life, by showing how great machinations and slender designs may promote or obviate one another, and the high and the low co-operate in the general system by unavoidable concatenation.

It is objected, that by this change of scenes the passions are interrupted in their progression, and that the principal event, being not advanced by a due gradation of preparatory incidents, wants at last the power to move, which constitutes the perfection of dramatick poetry. This reasoning is so specious, that it is received as true even by those who in daily experience feel it to be false. The interchanges of mingled scenes seldom fail to produce the intended vicissitudes of passion. Fiction cannot move so much, but that the attention may be easily transferred; and though it must be allowed that pleasing melancholy may be sometimes interrupted by unwelcome levity, yet let it be considered likewise, that melancholy is often not pleasing, and that the disturbance of one man may be the relief of another; that different auditors have different habitudes; and that, upon the whole, all pleasure consists in variety.

The players, who in their edition divided our author's works into comedies, histories, and tragedies, seem not to have distinguished the three kinds, by any very exact or definite ideas.

An action which ended happily to the principal persons, however serious or distressful through its intermediate incidents, in their opinion constituted a comedy. This

ture of its original merriment. Nor will this appear strange, if we consider the popular nature of the Greek spectacles. The people, it is probable, would still require, even in the midst of their tragick emotion, a little *dash* of their old satyrick *fun*, and poets were obliged to comply, in some degree, with their taste." *Twining's Notes*, pp. 202, 203, 204, 205, 206. STEEVENS.

idea of a comedy continued long amongst us, and plays were written, which, by changing the catastrophe, were tragedies to-day, and comedies to-morrow*.

Tragedy was not in those times a poem of more general dignity or elevation than comedy; it required only a calamitous conclusion, with which the common criticism of that age was satisfied, whatever lighter pleasure it afforded in its progress.

History was a series of actions, with no other than chronological succession, independent on each other, and without any tendency to introduce and regulate the conclusion. It is not always very nicely distinguished from tragedy. There is not much nearer approach to unity of action in the tragedy of Antony and Cleopatra, than in the history of Richard the Second. But a history might be continued through many plays; as it had no plan, it had no limits.

Through all these denominations of the drama, Shakspeare's mode of composition is the same; an interchange of seriousness and merriment, by which the mind is softened at one time, and exhilarated at another. But whatever be his purpose, whether to gladden or depress, or to conduct the story, without vehemence or emotion, through tracts of easy and familiar dialogue, he never fails to attain his purpose; as he commands us, we laugh or mourn, or sit silent with quiet expectation, in tranquillity without indifference.

When Shakspeare's plan is understood, most of the criticisms of Rymer and Voltaire vanish away. The play of Hamlet is opened, without impropriety, by two centinels; Iago bellows at Brabantio's window, without injury to the scheme of the play, though in terms which a modern audience would not easily endure; the character of Polonius is seasonable and useful; and the Gravediggers themselves may be heard with applause.

Shakspeare engaged in dramattick poetry with the world open before him; the rules of the ancients were yet known

* Thus, says Downes the Prompter, p. 22: "The tragedy of Romeo and Juliet was made some time after [1662] into a tragic-comedy, by Mr. James Howard, he preserving Romeo and Juliet alive; so that when the tragedy was revived again, 'twas play'd alternately, tragical one day, and tragi-comical another, for several days together." STEEVENS.

to few; the publick judgment was unformed; he had no example of such fame as might force him upon imitation, nor criticks of such authority as might restrain his extravagance: he therefore indulged his natural disposition, and his disposition, as Rymer has remarked, led him to comedy. In tragedy he often writes with great appearance of toil and study, what is written at last with little felicity; but in his comick scenes, he seems to produce without labour, what no labour can improve. In tragedy he is always struggling after some occasion to be comick; but in comedy he seems to repose, or to luxuriate, as in a mode of thinking congenial to his nature. In his tragick scenes there is always something wanting, but his comedy often surpasses expectation or desire. His comedy pleases by the thoughts and the language, and his tragedy for the greater part by incident and action. His tragedy seems to be skill, his comedy to be instinct*.

The force of his comick scenes has suffered little diminution from the changes made by a century and a half, in manners or in words. As his personages act upon principles arising from genuine passion, very little modified by particular forms, their pleasures and vexations are communicable to all times and to all places; they are natural, and therefore durable; the adventitious peculiarities of personal habits, are only superficial dies, bright and pleasing for a little while, yet soon fading to a dim tinct, without any remains of former lustre; and the discrimination of true passion are the colours of nature; they pervade the whole mass, and can only perish with the body that exhibits them. The accidental compositions of heterogeneous modes are dissolved by the chance that combined them; but the uniform simplicity of primitive qualities neither admits increase, nor suffers decay. The sand heaped by one flood is scattered by another, but the rock always continues in its place. The stream of time, which is continually washing the dissoluble fabricks of other

* In the rank and order of geniuses it must, I think, be allowed, that the writer of good tragedy is superior. And therefore, I think the opinion, which I am sorry to perceive gains ground, that Shakspeare's chief and predominant talent lay in comedy, tends to lessen the unrivalled excellence of our divine bard.

poets, passes without injury by the adamant of Shakspeare.

If there be, what I believe there is, in every nation, a style which never becomes obsolete, a certain mode of phraseology so consonant and congenial to the analogy and principles of its respective language, as to remain settled and unaltered: this style is probably to be sought in the common intercourse of life, among those who speak only to be understood, without ambition of elegance. The polite are always catching modish innovations, and the learned depart from established forms of speech, in hope of finding or making better; those who wish for distinction forsake the vulgar, when the vulgar is right; but there is a conversation above grossness and below refinement, where propriety resides, and where this poet seems to have gathered his comick dialogue. He is therefore more agreeable to the ears of the present age than any other author equally remote, and among his other excellencies deserves to be studied as one of the original masters of our language.

These observations are to be considered not as unexceptionably constant, but as containing general and predominant truth. Shakspeare's familiar dialogue is affirmed to be smooth and clear, yet not wholly without ruggedness or difficulty; as a country may be eminently fruitful, though it has spots unfit for cultivation: his characters are praised as natural, though their sentiments are sometimes forced, and their actions improbable; as the earth upon the whole is spherical, though its surface is varied with protuberances and cavities.

Shakspeare with his excellencies has likewise faults, and faults sufficient to obscure and overwhelm any other merit. I shall show them in the proportion in which they appear to me, without envious malignity or superstitious veneration. No question can be more innocently discussed than a dead poet's pretensions to renown; and little regard is due to that bigotry which sets candour higher than truth.

His first defect is that to which may be imputed most of the evil in books or in men. He sacrifices virtue to convenience, and is so much more careful to please than to instruct, that he seems to write without any moral purpose. From his writings indeed a system of social duty

may be selected, for he that thinks reasonably must think morally; but his precepts and axioms drop casually from him: he makes no just distribution of good or evil, nor is always careful to show in the virtuous a disapprobation of the wicked; he carries his persons indifferently through right and wrong, and at the close dismisses them without further care, and leaves their examples to operate by chance. This fault the barbarity of his age cannot extenuate; for it is always a writer's duty to make the world better, and justice is a virtue independent on time or place.

The plots are often so loosely formed, that a very slight consideration may improve them, and so carelessly pursued, that he seems not always fully to comprehend his own design. He omits opportunities of instructing or delighting, which the train of his story seems to force upon him, and apparently rejects those exhibitions which would be more affecting, for the sake of those which are more easy.

It may be observed, that in many of his plays the latter part is evidently neglected. When he found himself near the end of his work, and in view of his reward, he shortened the labour to snatch the profit. He therefore remits his efforts where he should most vigorously exert them, and his catastrophe is improbably produced or imperfectly represented.

He had no regard to distinction of time or place, but gives to one age or nation, without scruple, the customs, institutions, and opinions of another, at the expence not only of likelihood, but of possibility. These faults Pope has endeavoured, with more zeal than judgment, to transfer to his imagined interpolators. We need not wonder to find Hector quoting Aristotle, when we see the loves of Theseus and Hippolyta combined with the Gothick mythology of fairies. Shakspeare, indeed, was not the only violator of chronology, for in the same age Sidney, who wanted not the advantages of learning, has, in his *Arcadia*, confounded the pastoral with the feudal times, the days of innocence, quiet, and security, with those of turbulence, violence, and adventure.*

* As a further extenuation of Shakspeare's error, it may be urged that he found the Gothick mythology of Fairies already incorporated with Greek and Roman story, by our early transla-

In his comick scenes he is seldom very successful, when he engages his characters in reciprocations of smartness and contests of sarcasm; their jests are commonly gross, and their pleasantry licentious; neither his gentlemen nor his ladies have much delicacy, nor are sufficiently distinguished from his clowns by any appearance of refined manners. Whether he represented the real conversation of his time is not easy to determine; the reign of Elizabeth is commonly supposed to have been a time of stateliness, formality, and reserve, yet perhaps the relaxations of that severity were not very elegant. There must, however, have been always some modes of gayety preferable to others, and a writer ought to choose the best.

In tragedy his performance seems constantly to be worse, as his labour is more. The effusions of passion, which exigence forces out, are for the most part striking and energetick; but whenever he solicits his invention, or strains his faculties, the offspring of his throes is tumour, meanness, tediousness, and obscurity.

In narration he affects a disproportionate pomp of diction, and a wearisome train of circumlocution, and tells the incident imperfectly in many words, which might have been more plainly delivered in few. Narration in dramattick poetry is naturally tedious, as it is unanimated and inactive, and obstructs the progress of the action; it

tors. Phaer and Golding, who first gave us Virgil and Ovid in an English dress, introduce Fairies almost as often as Nymphs are mentioned in these classick authors. Thus, Homer, in his 24th Iliad:

Ἐν Σιπύλλῳ, ὅθι φασὶ θεῶν ἐμμεναι εἰνὰς
ΝΥΜΦΑΩΝ, αἵτ' ἀμφ' Ἀχελώϊον ἔρρωσσαντο.

But Chapman translates—

“ In Syphilus—in that place where 'tis said

“ The goddesse *Fairies* use to dance about the funeral bed

“ Of Achelous:—”

Neither are our ancient versifiers less culpable on the score of anachronisms. Under their hands the *balista* becomes a *cannon*, and other modern instruments are perpetually substituted for such as were the produce of the remotest ages.

It may be added, that in Arthur Hall's version of the fourth Iliad, Juno says to Jupiter:

“ —the time will come that *Totnam French* shal turn.”

And in the tenth book we hear of “ The Bastile,” “ Lemster wool,” and “ The Byble.” STEEVENS.

should therefore always be rapid, and enlivened by frequent interruption. Shakspeare found it an incumbrance, and instead of lightening it by brevity, endeavoured to recommend it by dignity and splendour.

His declamations or set speeches are commonly cold and weak, for his power was the power of nature; when he endeavoured, like other tragick writers, to catch opportunities of amplification, and instead of enquiring what the occasion demanded, to show how much his stores of knowledge could supply, he seldom escapes without the pity or resentment of his reader.

It is incident to him to be now and then entangled with an unwieldy sentiment, which he cannot well express, and will not reject; he struggles with it a while, and if it continues stubborn, comprises it in words such as occur, and leaves it to be disentangled and evolved by those who have more leisure to bestow upon it.

Not that always where the language is intricate, the thought is subtle, or the image always great where the line is bulky; the equality of words to things is very often neglected, and trivial sentiments and vulgar ideas disappoint the attention, to which they are recommended by sonorous epithets and swelling figures.

But the admirers of this great poet have most reason to complain when he approaches nearest to his highest excellence, and seems fully resolved to sink them in dejection, and mollify them with tender emotions by the fall of greatness, the danger of innocence, or the crosses of love. What he does best, he soon ceases to do. He is not long soft and pathetick without some idle conceit, or contemptible equivocation. He no sooner begins to move, than he counteracts himself; and terror and pity, as they are rising in the mind, are checked and blasted by sudden frigidity.

A quibble is to Shakspeare, what luminous vapours are to the traveller; he follows it at all adventures; it is sure to lead him out of his way, and sure to engulf him in the mire. It has some malignant power over his mind, and its fascinations are irresistible. Whatever be the dignity or profundity of his disquisitions, whether he be enlarging knowledge, or exalting affection, whether he be amusing attention with incidents, or enchaining it in suspense, let but a quibble spring up before him, and he leaves his work unfinished. A quibble is the golden apple for which he will always turn aside from his career, or stoop from

his elevation. A quibble, poor and barren as it is, gave him such delight, that he was content to purchase it by the sacrifice of reason, propriety, and truth. A quibble was to him the fatal Cleopatra for which he lost the world, and was content to lose it.

It will be thought strange, that, in enumerating the defects of this writer, I have not yet mentioned his neglect of the unities; his violation of those laws which have been instituted and established by the joint authority of poets and of criticks.

For his other deviations from the art of writing, I resign him to critical justice, without making any other demand in his favour, than that which must be indulged to all human excellence; that his virtues be rated with his failings: but, from the censure which this irregularity may bring upon him, I shall, with due reverence to that learning which I must oppose, adventure to try how I can defend him.

His histories, being neither tragedies nor comedies, are not subject to any of their laws: nothing more is necessary to all the praise which they expect, than that the changes of action be so prepared as to be understood, that the incidents be various and affecting, and the characters consistent, natural, and distinct. No other unity is intended, and therefore none is to be sought.

In his other works he has well enough preserved the unity of action. He has not, indeed, an intrigue regularly perplexed and regularly unravelled; he does not endeavour to hide his design only to discover it, for this is seldom the order of real events, and Shakspeare is the poet of nature: but his plan has commonly what Aristotle requires, a beginning, a middle, and an end; one event is concatenated with another, and the conclusion follows by easy consequence. There are perhaps some incidents that might be spared, as in other poets there is much talk that only fills up time upon the stage; but the general system makes gradual advances, and the end of the play is the end of expectation.

To the unities of time and place* he has shown no regard; and perhaps a nearer view of the principles on

* ——— UNITIES OF TIME and PLACE ———] Mr. Twining, among his judicious remarks on the poetick of Aristotle, observes, that “with respect to the strict unities of *time* and *place*, no such rules were imposed on the Greek poets by the criticks, or by them-

which they stand will diminish their value, and withdraw from them the veneration which, from the time of Corneille, they have very generally received, by discovering that they have given more trouble to the poet, than pleasure to the auditor.

The necessity of observing the unities of time and place arises from the supposed necessity of making the drama credible. The criticks hold it impossible, that an action of months or years can be possibly believed to pass in three hours; or that the spectator can suppose himself to sit in the theatre, while ambassadors go and return between distant kings, while armies are levied and towns besieged, while an exile wanders and returns, or till he whom they saw courting his mistress, shall lament the untimely fall of his son. The mind revolts from evident falsehood, and fiction loses its force when it departs from the resemblance of reality.

From the narrow limitation of time necessarily arises the contraction of place. The spectator, who knows that he saw the first Act at Alexandria, cannot suppose that he sees the next at Rome, at a distance to which not the dragons of Medea could, in so short a time, have transported him; he knows with certainty that he has not changed his place; and he knows that place cannot change itself; that what was a house cannot become a plain; that what was Thebes can never be Persepolis.

Such is the triumphant language with which a critick exults over the misery of an irregular poet, and exults commonly without resistance or reply. It is time therefore to tell him, by the authority of Shakspeare, that he assumes, as an unquestionable principle, a position, which, while his breath is forming it into words, his understanding pronounces to be false. It is false, that any representation is mistaken for reality; that any dramatick fable in its materiality was ever credible, or, for a single moment, was ever credited.

The objection arising from the impossibility of passing the first hour at Alexandria, and the next at Rome, sup-

selves; nor are imposed on *any* poet, either by the *nature*, or the *end*, of the dramatick imitation itself."

Aristotle does not express a single precept concerning unity of *place*. This supposed restraint originated from the hypercriticism of his French commentators. STEEVENS.

poses, that when the play opens, the spectator really imagines himself at Alexandria, and believes that his walk to the theatre has been a voyage to Egypt, and that he lives in the days of Antony and Cleopatra. Surely he that imagines this may imagine more. He that can take the stage at one time for the palace of the Ptolemies, may take it in half an hour for the promontory of Actium. Delusion, if delusion be admitted, has no certain limitation; if the spectator can be once persuaded, that his old acquaintance are Alexander and Cæsar, that a room illuminated with candles is the plain of Pharsalia, or the bank of Granicus, he is in a state of elevation above the reach of reason, or of truth, and from the heights of empyrean poetry, may despise the circumscriptions of terrestrial nature. There is no reason why a mind thus wandering in ecstasy should count the clock, or why an hour should not be a century in that calenture of the brains that can make the stage a field.

The truth is *, that the spectators are always in their senses, and know, from the first Act to the last, that the stage is only a stage, and that the players are only players. They come to hear a certain number of lines recited with just gesture and elegant modulation. The lines relate to some action, and an action must be in some place; but the different actions that complete a story may be in places very remote from each other; and where is the absurdity of allowing that space to represent first Athens, and then Sicily, which was always known to be neither Sicily nor Athens, but a modern theatre?

By supposition, as place is introduced, time may be extended; the time required by the fable elapses for the most part between the acts; for, of so much of the action as is represented, the real and poetical duration is the same. If, in the first Act, preparations for war against

* So in the Epistle Dedicatory to Dryden's *Love Triumphant*: "They who will not allow this liberty to a poet, make it a very ridiculous thing, for an audience to suppose themselves sometimes to be in a field, sometimes in a garden, and at other times in a chamber. There are not, indeed, so many absurdities in their supposition, as in ours: but, 'tis an original absurdity for the audience to suppose themselves to be in any other place, than in the very *theatre* in which they sit; which is neither a chamber, nor garden, nor yet a publick place of any business but that of the representation." STEEVENS.

Mithridates are represented to be made in Rome, the event of the war may, without absurdity, be represented, in the catastrophe, as happening in Pontus; we know that there is neither war, nor preparation for war; we know that we are neither in Rome nor Pontus; that neither Mithridates nor Lucullus are before us. The drama exhibits successive imitations of successive actions, and why may not the second imitation represent an action that happened years after the first; if it be so connected with it, that nothing but time can be supposed to intervene? Time is, of all modes of existence, most obsequious to the imagination; a lapse of years is as easily conceived as a passage of hours. In contemplation we easily contract the time of real actions, and therefore willingly permit it to be contracted when we only see their imitation.

It will be asked, how the drama moves, if it is not credited. It is credited with all the credit due to a drama. It is credited, whenever it moves, as a just picture of a real original; as representing to the auditor what he would himself feel, if he were to do or suffer what is there feigned to be suffered or to be done. The reflection that strikes the heart is not, that the evils before us are real evils, but that they are evils to which we ourselves may be exposed. If there be any fallacy, it is not that we fancy the players, but that we fancy ourselves unhappy for a moment; but we rather lament the possibility than suppose the presence of misery, as a mother weeps over her babe, when she remembers that death may take it from her. The delight of tragedy proceeds from our consciousness of fiction; if we thought murders and treasons real, they would please no more.

Imitations produce pain or pleasure, not because they are mistaken for realities, but because they bring realities to mind. When the imagination is recreated by a painted landscape, the trees are not supposed capable to give us shade, or the fountains coolness; but we consider, how we should be pleased with such fountains playing beside us, and such woods waving over us. We are agitated in reading the history of Henry the Fifth, yet no man takes his book for the field of Agincourt. A dramattick exhibition is a book recited with concomitants that increase or diminish its effect. Familiar comedy is often more powerful on the theatre, than in the page; imperial tra-

gedy is always less. The humour of Petruchio may be heightened by grimace; but what voice or what gesture can hope to add dignity or force to the soliloquy of Cato?

A play read, affects the mind like a play acted. It is therefore evident, that the action is not supposed to be real; and it follows, that between the Acts a longer or shorter time may be allowed to pass, and that no more account of space or duration is to be taken by the auditor of a drama, than by the reader of a narrative, before whom may pass in an hour the life of a hero, or the revolutions of an empire.

Whether Shakspeare knew the unities, and rejected them by design, or deviated from them by happy ignorance, it is, I think, impossible to decide, and useless to enquire. We may reasonably suppose, that, when he rose to notice, he did not want the counsels and admonitions of scholars and criticks, and that he at last deliberately persisted in a practice, which he might have begun by chance. As nothing is essential to the fable, but unity of action, and as the unities of time and place arise evidently from false assumptions, and, by circumscribing the extent of the drama, lessen its variety, I cannot think it much to be lamented, that they were not known by him, or not observed: nor, if such another poet could arise, should I very vehemently reproach him, that his first act passed at Venice, and his next in Cyprus. Such violations of rules merely positive, become the comprehensive genius of Shakspeare, and such censures are suitable to the minute and slender criticism of Voltaire:

Non usque adeo permiscuit imis
Longus summa dies, ut non, si voce Metelli
Serventur leges, malint a Cæsare tolli.

Yet when I speak thus slightly of dramattick rules, I cannot but recollect how much wit and learning may be produced against me; before such authorities I am afraid to stand, not that I think the present question one of those that are to be decided by mere authority, but because it is to be suspected, that these precepts have not been so easily received, but for better reasons than I have yet been able to find. The result of my inquiries, in which it would be ludicrous to boast of impartiality, is, that the

unities of time and place are not essential to a just drama, that though they may sometimes conduce to pleasure, they are always to be sacrificed to the nobler beauties of variety and instruction; and that a play, written with nice observation of critical rules, is to be contemplated as an elaborate curiosity, as the product of superfluous and ostentatious art, by which is shown, rather what is possible, than what is necessary.

He that, without diminution of any other excellence, shall preserve all the unities unbroken, deserves the like applause with the architect, who shall display all the orders of architecture in a citadel, without any deduction from its strength; but the principal beauty of a citadel is to exclude the enemy; and the greatest graces of a play are to copy nature, and instruct life.

Perhaps, what I have here not dogmatically but deliberately written, may recall the principles of the drama to a new examination. I am almost frightened at my own temerity; and when I estimate the fame and the strength of those that maintain the contrary opinion, am ready to sink down in reverential silence; as Æneas withdrew from the defence of Troy, when he saw Neptune shaking the wall, and Juno heading the besiegers.

Those whom my arguments cannot persuade to give their approbation to the judgment of Shakspeare, will easily, if they consider the condition of his life, make some allowance for his ignorance.

Every man's performances, to be rightly estimated, must be compared to the state of the age in which he lived, and with his own particular opportunities; and though to a reader a book be not worse or better for the circumstances of the author, yet as there is always a silent reference of human works to human abilities, and as the enquiry, how far man may extend his designs, or how high he may rate his native force, is of far greater dignity than in what rank we shall place any particular performance, curiosity is always busy to discover the instruments, as well as to survey the workmanship, to know how much is to be ascribed to original powers, and how much to casual and adventitious help. The palaces of Peru or Mexico were certainly mean and incommodious habitations, if compared to the houses of European monarchs; yet who could forbear to view them with astonish-

ment, who remembered that they were built without the use of iron?

The English nation, in the time of Shakspeare, was yet struggling to emerge from barbarity. The philology of Italy had been transplanted hither in the reign of Henry the Eighth; and the learned languages had been successfully cultivated by Lilly, Linacre, and More; by Pole, Cheke, and Gardiner; and afterwards by Smith, Clerk, Haddon, and Ascham. Greek was now taught to boys in the principal schools; and those who united elegance with learning, read, with great diligence, the Italian and Spanish poets. But literature was yet confined to professed scholars, or to men and women of high rank. The publick was gross and dark; and to be able to read and write, was an accomplishment still valued for its rarity.

Nations, like individuals, have their infancy. A people newly awakened to literary curiosity, being yet unacquainted with the true state of things, knows not how to judge of that which is proposed as its resemblance. Whatever is remote from common appearances is always welcome to vulgar, as to childish credulity; and of a country unenlightened by learning, the whole people is the vulgar. The study of those who then aspired to plebeian learning was laid out upon adventures, giants, dragons, and enchantments. The Death of Arthur was the favourite volume.

The mind, which has feasted on the luxurious wonders of fiction, has no taste of the insipidity of truth. A play, which imitated only the common occurrences of the world, would, upon the admirers of Palmerin and Guy of Warwick, have made little impression; he that wrote for such an audience was under the necessity of looking round for strange events and fabulous transactions, and that incredibility, by which maturer knowledge is offended, was the chief recommendation of writings, to unskilful curiosity.

Our author's plots are generally borrowed from novels; and it is reasonable to suppose, that he chose the most popular, such as were read by many, and related by more; for his audience could not have followed him through the intricacies of the drama, had they not held the thread of the story in their hands.

The stories, which we now find only in remoter authors,

were in his time accessible and familiar. The fable of *As You Like It*, which is supposed to be copied from Chaucer's *Gamelyn*, was a little pamphlet of those times; and old Mr. Cibber remembered the tale of Hamlet in plain English prose, which the criticks have now to seek in *Saxo Grammaticus*.

His English histories he took from English chronicles and English ballads; and as the ancient writers were made known to his countrymen by versions, they supplied him with new subjects; he dilated some of Plutarch's lives into plays, when they had been translated by North.

His plots, whether historical or fabulous, are always crowded with incidents, by which the attention of a rude people was more easily caught than by sentiment or argumentation; and such is the power of the marvellous, even over those who despise it, that every man finds his mind more strongly seized by the tragedies of Shakspeare than of any other writer; others please us by particular speeches, but he always makes us anxious for the event, and has perhaps excelled all but Homer in securing the first purpose of a writer, by exciting restless and unquenchable curiosity, and compelling him that reads his work to read it through.

The shows and bustle with which his plays abound have the same original. As knowledge advances, pleasure passes from the eye to the ear, but returns, as it declines, from the ear to the eye. Those to whom our author's labours were exhibited had more skill in pomps or processions than in poetical language, and perhaps wanted some visible and discriminated events, as comments on the dialogue. He knew how he should most please; and whether his practice is more agreeable to nature, or whether his example has prejudiced the nation, we still find that on our stage something must be done as well as said, and inactive declamation is very coldly heard, however musical or elegant, passionate or sublime.

Voltaire expresses his wonder, that our author's extravagancies are endured by a nation, which has seen the tragedy of Cato. Let him be answered, that Addison speaks the language of poets, and Shakspeare, of men. We find in Cato innumerable beauties which enamour us of its author, but we see nothing that acquaints us with human sentiments or human actions; we place it with the fairest and the noblest progeny which judgment propagates

by conjunction with learning ; but Othello is the vigorous and vivacious offspring of observation impregnated by genius. Cato affords a splendid exhibition of artificial and fictitious manners, and delivers just and noble sentiments, in diction easy, elevated, and harmonious, but its hopes and fears communicate no vibration to the heart ; the composition refers us only to the writer ; we pronounce the name of Cato, but we think on Addison*.

The work of a correct and regular writer is a garden accurately formed and diligently planted, varied with shades, and scented with flowers : the composition of Shakspeare is a forest, in which oaks extend their branches, and pines tower in the air, interspersed sometimes with weeds and brambles, and sometimes giving shelter to myrtles and to roses ; filling the eye with awful pomp, and gratifying the mind with endless diversity. Other poets display cabinets of precious rarities, minutely finished, wrought into shape, and polished into brightness. Shakspeare opens a mine which contains gold and diamonds in unexhaustible plenty, though clouded by incrustations, debased by impurities, and mingled with a mass of meaner minerals.

It has been much disputed, whether Shakspeare owed his excellence to his own native force, or whether he had the common helps of scholastick education, the precepts of critical science, and the examples of ancient authors.

There has always prevailed a tradition, that Shakspeare wanted learning, that he had no regular education, nor much skill in the dead languages. Jonson, his friend, affirms, that " he had small Latin, and less Greek ; " who, besides that he had no imaginable temptation to falsehood, wrote at a time when the character and acquisitions of Shakspeare were known to multitudes. His evidence ought therefore to decide the controversy, unless some testimony of equal force could be opposed.

Some have imagined, that they have discovered deep learning in imitation of old writers ; but the examples which I have known urged, were drawn from books translated in his time ; or were such easy coincidences of thought, as will happen to all who consider the same subjects ; or such remarks on life or axioms of morality as

* See Mr. Twining's commentary on Aristotle, note 51.

float in conversation, and are transmitted through the world in proverbial sentences.

I have found it remarked, that, in this important sentence, "Go before, I'll follow," we read a translation of, *I prae, sequar*. I have been told, that when Caliban, after a pleasing dream, says, "I cried to sleep again," the author imitates Anacreon, who had, like every other man, the same wish on the same occasion.

There are a few passages which may pass for imitations, but so few, that the exception only confirms the rule; he obtained them from accidental quotations, or by oral communication, and as he used what he had, would have used more if he had obtained it.

The Comedy of Errors is confessedly taken from the *Menæchmi* of Plautus; from the only play of Plautus which was then in English. What can be more probable, than that he who copied that, would have copied more; but that those which were not translated were inaccessible?

Whether he knew the modern languages is uncertain. That his plays have some French scenes proves but little; he might easily procure them to be written, and probably, even though he had known the language in the common degree, he could not have written it without assistance. In the story of Romeo and Juliet he is observed to have followed the English translation, where it deviates from the Italian; but this on the other part proves nothing against his knowledge of the original. He was to copy, not what he knew himself, but what was known to his audience.

It is most likely that he had learned Latin sufficiently to make him acquainted with construction, but that he never advanced to an easy perusal of the Roman authors. Concerning his skill in modern languages, I can find no sufficient ground of determination; but as no imitations of French or Italian authors have been discovered, though the Italian poetry was then in high esteem, I am inclined to believe, that he read little more than English, and chose for his fables only such tales as he found translated.

That much knowledge is scattered over his works is very justly observed by Pope, but it is often such knowledge as books did not supply. He that will understand Shakspeare, must not be content to study him in the

closet, he must look for his meaning sometimes among the sports of the field, and sometimes among the manufactures of the shop.

There is, however, proof enough that he was a very diligent reader, nor was our language then so indigent of books, but that he might very liberally indulge his curiosity without excursion into foreign literature. Many of the Roman authors were translated, and some of the Greek; the Reformation had filled the kingdom with theological learning; most of the topicks of human disquisition had found English writers; and poetry had been cultivated, not only with diligence, but success. This was a stock of knowledge sufficient for a mind so capable of appropriating and improving it.

But the greater part of his excellence was the product of his own genius. He found the English stage in a state of the utmost rudeness; no essays either in tragedy or comedy had appeared, from which it could be discovered to what degree of delight either one or other might be carried. Neither character nor dialogue were yet understood. Shakspeare may be truly said to have introduced them both amongst us, and in some of his happier scenes to have carried them both to the utmost height.

By what gradations of improvement he proceeded, is not easily known; for the chronology of his works is yet unsettled. Rowe is of opinion, that "perhaps we are not to look for his beginning, like those of other writers, in his least perfect works; art had so little, and nature so large a share in what he did, that for aught I know," says he, "the performances of his youth, as they were the most vigorous, were the best." But the power of nature is only the power of using to any certain purpose the materials which diligence procures, or opportunity supplies. Nature gives no man knowledge, and when images are collected by study and experience, can only assist in combining or applying them. Shakspeare, however favoured by nature, could impart only what he had learned; and as he must encrease his ideas, like other mortals, by gradual acquisition, he, like them, grew wiser as he grew older, could display life better, as he knew it more, and instruct with more efficacy, as he was himself more amply instructed.

There is a vigilance of observation and accuracy of distinction which books and precepts cannot confer; from

this almost all original and native excellence proceeds. Shakspeare must have looked upon mankind with perspicacity, in the highest degree curious and attentive. Other writers borrow their characters from preceding writers, and diversify them only by the accidental appendages of present manners; the dress is a little varied, but the body is the same. Our author had both matter and form to provide; for, except the characters of Chaucer, to whom I think he is not much indebted, there were no writers in English, and perhaps not many in other modern languages, which showed life in its native colours.

The contest about the original benevolence or malignity of man had not yet commenced. Speculation had not yet attempted to analyse the mind, to trace the passions to their sources, to unfold the seminal principles of vice and virtue, or sound the depths of the heart for the motives of action. All those enquiries, which from that time that human nature became the fashionable study, have been made sometimes with nice discernment, but often with idle subtilty, were yet unattempted. The tales, with which the infancy of learning was satisfied, exhibited only the superficial appearances of action, related the events, but omitted the causes, and were formed for such as delighted in wonders rather than in truth. Mankind was not then to be studied in the closet; he that would know the world, was under the necessity of gleaning his own remarks, by mingling as he could in its business and amusements.

Boyle congratulated himself upon his high birth, because it favoured his curiosity, by facilitating his access. Shakspeare had no such advantage; he came to London a needy adventurer, and lived for a time by very mean employments. Many works of genius and learning have been performed in states of life that appear very little favourable to thought or to enquiry; so many, that he who considers them is inclined to think that he sees enterprize and perseverance predominating over all external agency, and bidding help and hindrance vanish before them. The genius of Shakspeare was not to be depressed by the weight of poverty, nor limited by the narrow conversation to which men in want are inevitably condemned; the incumbrances of his fortune were shaken from his mind, *as dew-drops from a lion's mane*.

Though he had so many difficulties to encounter, and

so little assistance to surmount them, he has been able to obtain an exact knowledge of many modes of life, and many casts of native dispositions; to vary them with great multiplicity; to mark them by nice distinctions; and to show them in full view by proper combinations. In this part of his performances he had none to imitate, but has himself been imitated by all succeeding writers; and it may be doubted, whether from all his successors more maxims of theoretical knowledge, or more rules of practical prudence, can be collected, than he alone has given to his country.

Nor was his attention confined to the actions of men; he was an exact surveyor of the inanimate world; his descriptions have always some peculiarities, gathered by contemplating things as they really exist. It may be observed, that the oldest poets of many nations preserve their reputation, and that the following generations of wit, after a short celebrity, sink into oblivion. The first, whoever they be, must take their sentiments and descriptions immediately from knowledge; the resemblance is therefore just, their descriptions are verified by every eye, and their sentiments acknowledged by every breast. Those whom their fame invites to the same studies, copy partly them, and partly nature, till the books of one age gain such authority, as to stand in the place of nature to another, and imitation, always deviating a little, becomes at last capricious and casual. Shakspeare, whether life or nature be his subject, shows plainly, that he has seen with his own eyes; he gives the image which he receives, not weakened or distorted by the intervention of any other mind; the ignorant feel his representations to be just, and the learned see that they are complete.

Perhaps it would not be easy to find any author, except Homer, who invented so much as Shakspeare, who so much advanced the studies which he cultivated, or effused so much novelty upon his age or country. The form, the character, the language, and the shows of the English drama, are his. "He seems," says Dennis, "to have been the very original of our English tragical harmony, that is, the harmony of blank verse, diversified often by dissyllable and trissyllable terminations. For the diversity distinguishes it from heroick harmony, and by bringing it nearer to common use makes it more proper to gain attention, and more fit for action and dialogue.

Such verse we make when we are writing prose; we make such verse in common conversation.”*

I know not whether this phrase is rigorously just. The dissyllable termination, which the critick rightly appropriates to the drama, is to be found, though, I think, not in Gorboduc, which is confessedly before our author; yet in Hieronymo,† of which the date is not certain, but which there is reason to believe at least as old as his earliest plays. This however is certain, that he is the first who taught either tragedy or comedy to please, there being no theatrical piece of any older writer, of which the name is known, except to antiquaries and collectors of books, which are sought because they are scarce, and would not have been scarce, had they been much esteemed.

To him we must ascribe the praise, unless Spenser may divide it with him, of having first discovered to how much smoothness and harmony the English language could be softened. He has speeches, perhaps sometimes scenes, which have all the delicacy of Rowe, without his effeminacy. He endeavours indeed commonly to strike by the force and vigour of his dialogue, but he never executes his purpose better, than when he tries to sooth by softness.

Yet it must be at last confessed, that as we owe every thing to him, he owes something to us; that, if much of his praise is paid by perception and judgment, much is likewise given by custom and veneration. We fix our eyes upon his graces, and turn them from his deformities, and endure in him what we should in another loath or despise. If we endured without praising, respect for the father of our drama might excuse us; but I have seen, in the book of some modern critick, a collection of anoma-

* Thus, also, Dryden, in the Epistle Dedicatory to his Rival Ladies: “Shakspeare (who with some errors not to be avoided in that age, had, undoubtedly, a larger soul of poesie than ever any of our nation) was the first, who, to shun the pains of continual rhyming, invented that kind of writing which we call blank verse, but the French more properly, *prose mesurée*; into which the English tongue so naturally slides, that in writing prose 'tis hardly to be avoided.” STEEVENS.

† It appears from the Induction of Ben Jonson's Bartholomew Fair, to have been acted before the year 1590. See also vol. xv. p. 198, n. 3. STEEVENS.

lies, which show that he has corrupted language by every mode of depravation, but which his admirer has accumulated as a monument of honour.

He has scenes of undoubted and perpetual excellence, but perhaps not one play, which, if it were now exhibited as the work of a contemporary writer, would be heard to the conclusion. I am indeed far from thinking, that his works were wrought to his own ideas of perfection; when they were such as would satisfy the audience, they satisfied the writer. It is seldom that authors, though more studious of fame than Shakspeare, rise much above the standard of their own age; to add a little to what is best will always be sufficient for present praise, and those who find themselves exalted into fame, are willing to credit their encomiasts, and to spare the labour of contending with themselves.

It does not appear, that Shakspeare thought his works worthy of posterity, that he levied any ideal tribute upon future times, or had any further prospect, than of present popularity and present profit. When his plays had been acted, his hope was at an end; he solicited no addition of honour from the reader. He therefore made no scruple to repeat the same jests in many dialogues, or to entangle different plots by the same knot of perplexity, which may be at least forgiven him, by those who recollect, that of Congreve's four comedies, two are concluded by a marriage in a mask, by a deception, which perhaps never happened, and which, whether likely or not, he did not invent.

So careless was this great poet of future fame, that, though he retired to ease and plenty, while he was yet little *declined into the vale of years*, before he could be disgusted with fatigue, or disabled by infirmity, he made no collection of his works, nor desired to rescue those that had been already published from the depravations that obscured them, or secure to the rest a better destiny, by giving them to the world in their genuine state.*

Of the plays which bear the name of Shakspeare in the late editions, the greater part were not published till about seven years after his death, and the few which ap-

* What Montaigne has said of his own works may almost be applied to those of Shakspeare, who "n'avoit point d'autre sergent de bande à ranger ses pieces, que la fortune." STEEVENS.

peared in his life are apparently thrust into the world without the care of the author, and therefore probably without his knowledge.

Of all the publishers, clandestine or professed, the negligence and unskilfulness has by the late revisers been sufficiently shown. The faults of all are indeed numerous and gross, and have not only corrupted many passages perhaps beyond recovery, but have brought others into suspicion, which are only obscured by obsolete phraseology, or by the writer's unskilfulness and affectation. To alter is more easy than to explain, and temerity is a more common quality than diligence. Those who saw that they must employ conjecture to a certain degree, were willing to indulge it a little further. Had the author published his own works, we should have sat quietly down to disentangle his intricacies, and clear his obscurities; but now we tear what we cannot loose, and eject what we happen not to understand.

The faults are more than could have happened without the concurrence of many causes. The style of Shakspeare was in itself ungrammatical, perplexed, and obscure; his works were transcribed for the players by those who may be supposed to have seldom understood them; they were transmitted by copiers equally unskilful, who still multiplied errors; they were perhaps sometimes mutilated by the actors, for the sake of shortening the speeches; and were at last printed without correction of the press.*

* Much deserved censure has been thrown out on the carelessness of our ancient printers, as well as on the wretched transcripts they obtained from contemporary theatres. Yet I cannot help observing that, even at this instant, should any one undertake to publish a play of Shakspeare from pages of no greater fidelity than such as are issued out for the use of performers, the press would teem with as interpolated and inextricable nonsense as it produced above a century ago. Mr. Colman (who cannot be suspected of ignorance or misrepresentation) in his preface to the last edition of Beaumont and Fletcher, very forcibly styles the prompter's books "the most inaccurate and barbarous of all manuscripts." And well may they deserve that character; for verse (as I am informed) still continues to be transcribed as prose by a set of mercenaries, who in general have neither the advantage of literature or understanding. "*Foliis tantum ne carmina manda, ne turbata volent ludibria,*" was the request of Virgil's

In this state they remained, not as Dr. Warburton supposes, because they were unregarded, but because the editor's art was not yet applied to modern languages, and our ancestors were accustomed to so much negligence of English printers, that they could very patiently endure it. At last an edition was undertaken by Rowe: not because a poet was to be published by a poet, for Rowe seems to have thought very little on correction or explanation, but that our author's works might appear like those of his fraternity, with the appendages of a life and recommendatory preface. Rowe has been clamorously blamed for not performing what he did not undertake, and it is time that justice be done him, by confessing, that though he seems to have had no thought of corruption beyond the printer's errors, yet he has made many emendations, if they were not made before, which his successors have received without acknowledgment, and which, if they had produced them, would have filled pages and pages with censures of the stupidity by which the faults were committed, with displays of the absurdities which they involved, with ostentatious expositions of the new reading, and self-congratulations on the happiness of discovering it.

As of the other editors I have preserved the prefaces, I have likewise borrowed the author's life from Rowe, though not written with much elegance or spirit; it relates, however, what is now to be known, and therefore deserves to pass through all succeeding publications.

The nation had been for many years content enough with Mr. Rowe's performance, when Mr. Pope made them acquainted with the true state of Shakspeare's text, showed that it was extremely corrupt, and gave reason to hope that there were means of reforming it. He collated the old copies, which none had thought to examine before, and restored many lines to their integrity; but, by a very compendious criticism, he rejected whatever he disliked, and thought more of amputation than of cure.

I know not why he is commended by Dr. Warburton for distinguishing the genuine from the spurious plays. In this choice he exerted no judgment of his own; the plays which he received, were given to Hemings and

Hero to the Sybil, and should also be the supplication of every dramattick poet to the agents of a prompter. STEEVENS.

Condell, the first editors; and those which he rejected, though, according to the licentiousness of the press in those times, they were printed during Shakspeare's life, with his name, had been omitted by his friends, and were never added to his works before the edition of 1664, from which they were copied by the latter printers.

This was a work which Pope seems to have thought unworthy of his abilities, being not able to suppress his contempt of *the dull duty of an editor*. He understood but half his undertaking. The duty of a collator is indeed dull, yet, like other tedious tasks, is very necessary; but an emendatory critick would ill discharge his duty, without qualities very different from dulness. In perusing a corrupted piece, he must have before him all possibilities of meaning, with all possibilities of expression. Such must be his comprehension of thought, and such his copiousness of language. Out of many readings possible, he must be able to select that which best suits with the state, opinions, and modes of language prevailing in every age, and with his author's particular cast of thought, and turn of expression. Such must be his knowledge, and such his taste. Conjectural criticism demands more than humanity possesses, and he that exercises it with most praise, has very frequent need of indulgence. Let us now be told no more of the dull duty of an editor.

Confidence is the common consequence of success. They whose excellence of any kind has been loudly celebrated, are ready to conclude, that their powers are universal. Pope's edition fell below his own expectations, and he was so much offended, when he was found to have left any thing for others to do, that he passed the latter part of his life in a state of hostility with verbal criticism.*

* The following compliment from Broome (says Dr. Joseph Warton) Pope could not take much pleasure in reading; for he could not value himself on his edition of Shakspeare:

“ If aught on earth, when once this breath is fled,
 “ With human transport touch the mighty dead,
 “ Shakspeare, rejoice! his hand thy page refines;
 “ Now ev'ry scene with native brightness shines;
 “ Just to thy fame, he gives thy genuine thought;
 “ So Tully publish'd what Lucretius wrote;
 “ Prun'd by his care, thy laurels loftier grow,
 “ And bloom afresh on thy immortal brow.”

Broome's Verses to Mr. Pope. STEEVENS.

I have retained all his notes, that no fragment of so great a writer may be lost; his preface, valuable alike for elegance of composition and justness of remark, and containing a general criticism on his author, so extensive that little can be added, and so exact that little can be disputed, every editor has an interest to suppress, but that every reader would demand its insertion.

Pope was succeeded by Theobald, a man of narrow comprehension, and small acquisitions, with no native and intrinsic splendour of genius, with little of the artificial light of learning, but zealous for minute accuracy, and not negligent in pursuing it. He collated the ancient copies, and rectified many errors. A man so anxiously scrupulous might have been expected to do more, but what little he did was commonly right.

In his reports of copies and editions he is not to be trusted without examination. He speaks sometimes indefinitely of copies, when he has only one. In his enumeration of editions, he mentions the two first folios as of high, and the third folio as of middle authority; but the truth is, that the first is equivalent to all others, and that the rest only deviate from it by the printer's negligence. Whoever has any of the folios has all, excepting those diversities which mere reiteration of editions will produce. I collated them all at the beginning, but afterwards used only the first.

Of his notes I have generally retained those which he retained himself in his second edition, except when they were confuted by subsequent annotators, or were too minute to merit preservation. I have sometimes adopted his restoration of a comma, without inserting the panegyrick in which he celebrated himself for his achievement. The exuberant excrescence of his diction I have often lopped, his triumphant exultations over Pope and Rowe I have sometimes suppressed, and his contemptible ostentation I have frequently concealed; but I have in some places shown him, as he would have shown himself, for the reader's diversion, that the inflated emptiness of some notes may justify or excuse the contraction of the rest.

Theobald, thus weak and ignorant, thus mean and faithless, thus petulant and ostentatious, by the good luck of having Pope for his enemy, has escaped, and escaped alone, with reputation, from this undertaking. So willingly does the world support those who solicit favour,

against those who command reverence ; and so easily is he praised, whom no man can envy.

Our author fell then into the hands of Sir Thomas Hanmer, the Oxford editor, a man, in my opinion, eminently qualified by nature for such studies. He had, what is the first requisite to emendatory criticism, that intuition by which the poet's intention is immediately discovered, and that dexterity of intellect which despatches its work by the easiest means. He had undoubtedly read much ; his acquaintance with customs, opinions, and traditions, seems to have been large ; and he is often learned without show. He seldom passes what he does not understand, without an attempt to find or to make a meaning, and sometimes hastily makes what a little more attention would have found. He is solicitous to reduce to grammar, what he could not be sure that his author intended to be grammatical. Shakspeare regarded more the series of ideas, than of words ; and his language, not being designed for the reader's desk, was all that he desired it to be, if it conveyed his meaning to the audience.

Hanmer's care of the metre has been too violently censured. He found the measure reformed in so many passages, by the silent labours of some editors, with the silent acquiescence of the rest, that he thought himself allowed to extend a little further the licence, which had already been carried so far without reprehension ; and of his corrections in general, it must be confessed, that they are often just, and made commonly with the least possible violation of the text.

But, by inserting his emendations, whether invented or borrowed, into the page, without any notice of varying copies, he has appropriated the labour of his predecessors, and made his own edition of little authority. His confidence, indeed, both in himself and others, was too great ; he supposes all to be right that was done by Pope and Theobald ; he seems not to suspect a critick of fallibility, and it was but reasonable that he should claim what he so liberally granted.

As he never writes without careful enquiry and diligent consideration, I have received all his notes, and believe that every reader will wish for more.

Of the last editor it is more difficult to speak. Respect is due to high place, tenderness to living reputation, and veneration to genius and learning ; but he cannot be justly

offended at that liberty of which he has himself so frequently given an example, nor very solicitous what is thought of notes, which he ought never to have considered as part of his serious employments, and which, I suppose, since the ardour of composition is remitted, he no longer numbers among his happy effusions.

The original and predominant error of his commentary, is acquiescence in his first thoughts; that precipitation which is produced by consciousness of quick discernment; and that confidence which presumes to do, by surveying the surface, what labour only can perform, by penetrating the bottom. His notes exhibit sometimes perverse interpretations, and sometimes improbable conjectures; he at one time gives the author more profundity of meaning than the sentence admits, and at another discovers absurdities, where the sense is plain to every other reader. But his emendations are likewise often happy and just; and his interpretation of obscure passages learned and sagacious.

Of his notes, I have commonly rejected those, against which the general voice of the publick has exclaimed, or which their own incongruity immediately condemns, and which, I suppose the author himself would desire to be forgotten. Of the rest, to part I have given the highest approbation, by inserting the offered reading in the text; part I have left to the judgment of the reader, as doubtful, though specious; and part I have censured without reserve, but I am sure without bitterness of malice, and, I hope, without wantonness of insult.

It is no pleasure to me, in revising my volumes, to observe how much paper is wasted in confutation. Whoever considers the revolutions of learning, and the various questions of greater or less importance, upon which wit and reason have exercised their powers, must lament the unsuccessfulness of enquiry, and the slow advances of truth, when he reflects, that great part of the labour of every writer is only the destruction of those that went before him. The first care of the builder of a new system is to demolish the fabricks which are standing. The chief desire of him that comments an author, is to show how much other commentators have corrupted and obscured him. The opinions prevalent in one age, as truths above the reach of controversy, are confuted and rejected in another, and rise again to reception in remoter times. Thus the human mind is kept in motion without progress.

Thus sometimes truth and error, and sometimes contrarities of error, take each other's place by reciprocal invasion. The tide of seeming knowledge which is poured over one generation, retires and leaves another naked and barren; the sudden meteors of intelligence which for a while appear to shoot their beams into the regions of obscurity, on a sudden withdraw their lustre, and leave mortals again to grope their way.

These elevations and depressions of renown, and the contradictions to which all improvers of knowledge must for ever be exposed, since they are not escaped by the highest and brightest of mankind, may surely be endured with patience by criticks and annotators, who can rank themselves but as the satellites of their authors. How canst thou beg for life, says Homer's hero to his captive, when thou knowest that thou art now to suffer only what must another day be suffered by Achilles?

Dr. Warburton had a name sufficient to confer celebrity on those who could exalt themselves into antagonists, and his notes have raised a clamour too loud to be distinct. His chief assailants are the authors of *The Canons of Criticism*, and of *The Revisal of Shakspeare's Text*; of whom one ridicules his errors with airy petulance, suitable enough to the levity of the controversy; the other attacks them with gloomy malignity, as if he were dragging to justice an assassin or incendiary. The one stings* like a fly, sucks a little blood, takes a gay flutter, and returns for more: the other bites like a viper, and would be glad to leave inflammations and gangrene behind him. When I think on one, with his confederates, I remember the danger of *Coriolanus*, who was afraid that "girls with spits, and boys with stones, should slay him in puny battle;" when the other crosses my imagination, I remember the prodigy in *Macbeth*:

A falcon tow'ring in his pride of place,
Was by a mousing owl hawk'd at and kill'd.

Let me however do them justice. One is a wit, and one a scholar†. They have both shown acuteness sufficient

* See Boswell's *Life of Dr. Johnson*, vol. i. p. 227, 3d edit.
REED.

† It is extraordinary that this gentleman should attempt so voluminous a work, as the *Revisal of Shakspeare's text*, when

in the discovery of faults, and have both advanced some probable interpretations of obscure passages; but when they aspire to conjecture and emendation, it appears how falsely we all estimate our own abilities, and the little which they have been able to perform might have taught them more candour to the endeavours of others.

Before Dr. Warburton's edition, *Critical Observations on Shakspeare* had been published by Mr. Upton*, a man skilled in languages, and acquainted with books, but who seems to have had no great vigour of genius or nicety of taste. Many of his explanations are curious and useful, but he likewise, though he professed to oppose the licentious confidence of editors, and adhere to the old copies, is unable to restrain the rage of emendation, though his ardour is ill seconded by his skill. Every cold empirick, when his heart is expanded by a successful experiment, swells into a theorist, and the laborious collator at some unlucky moment frolicks in conjecture.

Critical, historical, and explanatory Notes have been likewise published upon Shakspeare by Dr. Grey, whose diligent perusal of the old English writers has enabled him to make some useful observations. What he undertook he has well enough performed, but as he neither attempts judicial nor emendatory criticism, he employs rather his memory than his sagacity. It were to be wished that all would endeavour to imitate his modesty, who have not been able to surpass his knowledge.

I can say with great sincerity of all my predecessors, what I hope will hereafter be said of me, that not one has left Shakspeare without improvement, nor is there one to whom I have not been indebted for assistance and information. Whatever I have taken from them, it was my intention to refer to its original author, and it is certain, that what I have not given to another, I believed when I wrote it to be my own. In some perhaps I have been anticipated; but if I am ever found to encroach upon the

he tells us in his preface, "he was not so fortunate as to be furnished with either of the folio editions, much less any of the ancient quartos: and even Sir Thomas Hanmer's performance was known to him only by Dr. Warburton's representation."

FARMER.

* Republished by him in 1748, after Dr. Warburton's edition, with alterations, &c. STEEVENS.

remarks of any other commentators, I am willing that the honour, be it more or less, should be transferred to the first claimant, for his right, and his alone, stands above dispute; the second can prove his pretensions only to himself, nor can himself always distinguish invention, with sufficient certainty, from recollection.

They have all been treated by me with candour, which they have not been careful of observing to one another. It is not easy to discover from what cause the acrimony of a scholiast can naturally proceed. The subjects to be discussed by him are of very small importance; they involve neither property nor liberty; nor favour the interest of sect or party. The various readings of copies, and different interpretations of a passage, seem to be questions that might exercise the wit, without engaging the passions. But whether it be, that *small things make mean men proud*, and vanity catches small occasions; or that all contrariety of opinion, even in those that can defend it no longer, makes proud men angry; there is often found in commentaries a spontaneous strain of invective and contempt, more eager and venomous than is vented by the most furious controvertist in politicks against those whom he is hired to defame.

Perhaps the lightness of the matter may conduce to the vehemence of the agency; when the truth to be investigated is so near to inexistence, as to escape attention, its bulk is to be enlarged by rage and exclamation: that to which all would be indifferent in its original state, may attract notice when the fate of a name is appended to it. A commentator has indeed great temptations to supply by turbulence what he wants of dignity, to beat his little gold to a spacious surface, to work that to foam which no art or diligence can exalt to spirit.

The notes which I have borrowed or written are either illustrative, by which difficulties are explained; or judicial, by which faults and beauties are remarked; or emendatory, by which depravations are corrected.

The explanations transcribed from others, if I do not subjoin any other interpretation, I suppose commonly to be right, at least I intend by acquiescence to confess, that I have nothing better to propose.

After the labours of all the editors, I found many passages which appeared to me likely to obstruct the greater number of readers, and thought it my duty to facilitate

their passage. It is impossible for an expositor not to write too little for some, and too much for others. He can only judge what is necessary by his own experience; and how long soever he may deliberate, will at last explain many lines which the learned will think impossible to be mistaken, and omit many for which the ignorant will want his help. These are censures merely relative, and must be quietly endured. I have endeavoured to be neither superfluously copious, or scrupulously reserved, and hope that I have made my author's meaning accessible to many, who before were frightened from perusing him, and contributed something to the publick, by diffusing innocent and rational pleasure.

The complete explanation of an author not systematick and consequential, but desultory and vagrant, abounding in casual allusions and light hints, is not to be expected from any single scholiast. All personal reflections, when names are suppressed, must be in a few years irrecoverably obliterated; and customs, too minute to attract the notice of law, such as modes of dress, formalities of conversation, rules of visits, disposition of furniture, and practices of ceremony, which naturally find places in familiar dialogue, are so fugitive and unsubstantial, that they are not easily retained or recovered. What can be known will be collected by chance, from the recesses of obscure and obsolete papers, perused commonly with some other view. Of this knowledge every man has some, and none has much; but when an author has engaged the publick attention, those who can add any thing to his illustration communicate their discoveries, and time produces what had eluded diligence.

To time I have been obliged to resign many passages, which, though I did not understand them, will perhaps hereafter be explained, having, I hope, illustrated some, which others have neglected or mistaken, sometimes by short remarks, or marginal directions, such as every editor has added at his will, and often by comments more laborious than the matter will seem to deserve; but that which is most difficult is not always most important, and to an editor nothing is a trifle by which his author is obscured.

The poetical beauties or defects I have not been very diligent to observe. Some plays have more, and some fewer judicious observations, not in proportion to their dif-

ference of merit, but because I gave this part of my design to chance and to caprice. The reader, I believe, is seldom pleased to find his opinion anticipated; it is natural to delight more in what we find or make, than in what we receive. Judgment, like other faculties, is improved by practice, and its advancement is hindered by submission to dictatorial decisions, as the memory grows torpid by the use of a table-book. Some initiation is however necessary; of all skill, part is infused by precept, and part is obtained by habit; I have therefore shown so much as may enable the candidate of criticism to discover the rest.

To the end of most plays I have added short strictures, containing a general censure of faults, or praise of excellence; in which I know not how much I have concurred with the current opinion; but I have not, by any affectation of singularity, deviated from it. Nothing is minutely and particularly examined, and therefore it is to be supposed, that in the plays which are condemned there is much to be praised, and in those which are praised much to be condemned.

The part of criticism in which the whole succession of editors has laboured with the greatest diligence, which has occasioned the most arrogant ostentation, and excited the keenest acrimony, is the emendation of corrupted passages, to which the publick attention having been first drawn by the violence of the contention between Pope and Theobald, has been continued by the persecution, which, with a kind of conspiracy, has been since raised against all the publishers of Shakspeare.

That many passages have passed in a state of depravation through all the editions is indubitably certain; of these, the restoration is only to be attempted by collation of copies, or sagacity of conjecture. The collator's province is safe and easy, the conjecturer's perilous and difficult. Yet as the greater part of the plays are extant only in one copy, the peril must not be avoided, nor the difficulty refused.

Of the readings which this emulation of amendment has hitherto produced, some from the labours of every publisher I have advanced into the text; those are to be considered as in my opinion sufficiently supported; some I have rejected without mention, as evidently erroneous; some I have left in the notes without censure or approbation, as resting in equipoise between objection and de-

fence; and some, which seemed specious but not right, I have inserted with a subsequent animadversion.

Having classed the observations of others, I was at last to try what I could substitute for their mistakes, and how I could supply their omissions. I collated such copies as I could procure, and wished for more, but have not found the collectors of these rarities very communicative. Of the editions which chance or kindness put into my hands I have given an enumeration, that I may not be blamed for neglecting what I had not the power to do.

By examining the old copies, I soon found that the later publishers, with all their boasts of diligence, suffered many passages to stand unauthorized, and contented themselves with Rowe's regulation of the text, even where they knew it to be arbitrary, and with a little consideration might have found it to be wrong. Some of these alterations are only the ejection of a word for one that appeared to him more elegant or more intelligible. These corruptions I have often silently rectified; for the history of our language, and the true force of our words, can only be preserved, by keeping the text of authors free from adulteration. Others, and those very frequent, smoothed the cadence, or regulated the measure; on these I have not exercised the same rigour; if only a word was transposed, or a particle inserted or omitted, I have sometimes suffered the line to stand; for the inconstancy of the copies is such, as that some liberties may be easily permitted. But this practice I have not suffered to proceed far, having restored the primitive diction wherever it could for any reason be preferred.

The emendations, which comparison of copies supplied, I have inserted in the text; sometimes, where the improvement was slight, without notice, and sometimes with an account of the reasons of the change.

Conjecture, though it be sometimes unavoidable, I have not wantonly nor licentiously indulged. It has been my settled principle, that the reading of the ancient books is probably true, and therefore is not to be disturbed for the sake of elegance, perspicuity, or mere improvement of the sense. For though much credit is not due to the fidelity, nor any to the judgment of the first publishers, yet they who had the copy before their eyes were more likely to read it right, than we who read it only by imagination. But it is evident that they have often made strange mis-

takes by ignorance or negligence, and that therefore something may be properly attempted by criticism, keeping the middle way between presumption and timidity.

Such criticism I have attempted to practise, and where any passage appeared inextricably perplexed, have endeavoured to discover how it may be recalled to sense, with least violence. But my first labour is, always to turn the old text on every side, and try if there be any interstice, through which light can find its way; nor would Huetius himself condemn me, as refusing the trouble of research, for the ambition of alteration. In this modest industry, I have not been unsuccessful. I have rescued many lines from the violations of temerity, and secured many scenes from the inroads of correction. I have adopted the Roman sentiment, that it is more honourable to save a citizen, than to kill an enemy, and have been more careful to protect than to attack.

I have preserved the common distribution of the plays into acts, though I believe it to be in almost all the plays void of authority. Some of those which are divided in the later editions have no division in the first folio, and some that are divided in the folio have no division in the preceding copies. The settled mode of the theatre requires four intervals in the play, but few, if any, of our author's compositions can be properly distributed in that manner. An act is so much of the drama as passes without intervention of time, or change of place. A pause makes a new act. In every real, and therefore in every imitative action, the intervals may be more or fewer, the restriction of five acts being accidental and arbitrary. This Shakspeare knew, and this he practised; his plays were written, and at first printed in one unbroken continuity, and ought now to be exhibited with short pauses, interposed as often as the scene is changed, or any considerable time is required to pass. This method would at once quell a thousand absurdities.

In restoring the author's works to their integrity, I have considered the punctuation as wholly in my power; for what could be their care of colons and commas, who corrupted words and sentences. Whatever could be done by adjusting points, is therefore silently performed, in some plays, with much diligence, in others with less; it is hard to keep a busy eye steadily fixed upon evanescent atoms, or a discursive mind upon evanescent truth.

The same liberty has been taken with a few particles, or other words of slight effect. I have sometimes inserted or omitted them without notice. I have done that sometimes, which the other editors have done always, and which indeed the state of the text may sufficiently justify.

The greater part of readers, instead of blaming us for passing trifles, will wonder that on mere trifles so much labour is expended, with such importance of debate, and such solemnity of diction. To these I answer with confidence, that they are judging of an art which they do not understand; yet cannot much reproach them with their ignorance, nor promise that they would become in general, by learning criticism, more useful, happier, or wiser.

As I practised conjecture more, I learned to trust it less; and after I had printed a few plays, resolved to insert none of my own readings in the text. Upon this caution I now congratulate myself, for every day encreases my doubt of my emendations.

Since I have confined my imagination to the margin, it must not be considered as very reprehensible, if I have suffered it to play some freaks in its own dominion. There is no danger in conjecture, if it be proposed as conjecture; and while the text remains uninjured, those changes may be safely offered, which are not considered even by him that offers them as necessary or safe.

If my readings are of little value, they have not been ostentatiously displayed or importunately obtruded. I could have written longer notes, for the art of writing notes is not of difficult attainment. The work is performed, first by railing at the stupidity, negligence, ignorance, and asinine tastelessness of the former editors, showing, from all that goes before and all that follows, the inelegance and absurdity of the old reading; then by proposing something, which to superficial readers would seem specious, but which the editor rejects with indignation; then by producing the true reading, with a long paraphrase, and concluding with loud acclamations on the discovery, and a sober wish for the advancement and prosperity of genuine criticism.

All this may be done, and perhaps done sometimes without impropriety. But I have always suspected that the reading is right, which requires many words to prove it wrong; and the emendation wrong, that cannot without so much much labour appear to be right. The

justness of a happy restoration strikes at once, and the moral precept may be well applied to criticism, "*quod dubitas ne feceris.*"

To dread the shore which he sees spread with wrecks, is natural to the sailor. I had before my eye, so many critical adventures ended in miscarriage, that caution was forced upon me. I encountered in every page wit struggling with its own sophistry, and learning confused by the multiplicity of its views. I was forced to censure those whom I admired, and could not but reflect, while I was dispossessing their emendations, how soon the same fate might happen to my own, and how many of the readings which I have corrected may be by some other editor defended and established.

"Criticks I saw, that others' names efface,
 "And fix their own, with labour, in the place;
 "Their own, like others, soon their place resign'd,
 "Or disappear'd, and left the first behind." POPE.

That a conjectural critick should often be mistaken, cannot be wonderful, either to others, or himself, if it be considered, that in his art there is no system, no principal and axiomatical truth that regulates subordinate positions. His chance of error is renewed at every attempt; an oblique view of the passage, a slight misapprehension of a phrase, a casual inattention to the parts connected, is sufficient to make him not only fail, but fail ridiculously; and when he succeeds best he produces perhaps but one reading of many probable, and he that suggests another will always be able to dispute his claims.

It is an unhappy state, in which danger is hid under pleasure. The allurements of emendation are scarcely resistible. Conjecture has all the joy and all the pride of invention, and he that has once started a happy change, is too much delighted to consider what objections may rise against it.

Yet conjectural criticism has been of great use in the learned world; nor is it my intention to depreciate a study, that has exercised so many mighty minds, from the revival of learning to our own age, from the Bishop of Aleria* to English Bentley. The criticks on ancient

* —the Bishop of Aleria—] John Andreas. He was secretary to the Vatican Library during the papacies of Paul II. and

authors have, in the exercise of their sagacity, many assistances, which the editor of Shakspeare is condemned to want. They are employed upon grammatical and settled languages, whose construction contributes so much to perspicuity, that Homer has fewer passages unintelligible than Chaucer. The words have not only a known regimen, but invariable quantities, which direct and confine the choice. There are commonly more manuscripts than one; and they do not often conspire in the same mistakes. Yet Scaliger could confess to Salmasius how little satisfaction his emendations gave him: "*Illudunt nobis conjecturæ, quarum nos pudet, posteaquam in meliores codices incidimus.*" And Lipsius could complain, that criticks were making faults, by trying to remove them, "*Ut olim vitiis, ita nunc remediis laboratur.*" And indeed, when mere conjecture is to be used, the emendations of Scaliger and Lipsius, notwithstanding their wonderful sagacity and erudition, are often vague and disputable, like mine or Theobald's.

Perhaps I may not be more censured for doing wrong, than for doing little; for raising in the publick expectations, which at last I have not answered. The expectation of ignorance is indefinite, and that of knowledge is often tyrannical. It is hard to satisfy those who know not what to demand, or those who demand by design what they think impossible to be done. I have indeed disappointed no opinion more than my own; yet I have endeavoured to perform my task with no slight solicitude. Not a single passage in the whole work has appeared to me corrupt, which I have not attempted to restore; or obscure, which I have not endeavoured to illustrate. In many I have failed like others; and from many, after all my efforts, I have retreated, and confessed the repulse. I have not passed over, with affected superiority, what is equally difficult to the reader and to myself, but where I could not instruct him, have owned my ignorance. I might easily

Sixtus IV. By the former he was employed to superintend such works as were to be multiplied by the new art of printing, at that time brought into Rome. He published Herodotus, Strabo, Livy, Aulus Gellius, &c. His school-fellow, Cardinal de Cusa, procured him the bishoprick of Accia, a province in Corsica; and Paul II. afterwards appointed him to that of Aleria in the same island, where he died in 1493. See Fabric. Bibl. Lat. vol. iii. 894. STEEVENS.

have accumulated a mass of seeming learning upon easy scenes; but it ought not to be imputed to negligence, that, where nothing was necessary, nothing has been done, or that, where others have said enough, I have said no more.

Notes are often necessary, but they are necessary evils. Let him, that is yet unacquainted with the powers of Shakspeare, and who desires to feel the highest pleasure that the drama can give, read every play, from the first scene to the last, with utter negligence of all his commentators. When his fancy is once on the wing, let it not stoop at correction or explanation. When his attention is strongly engaged, let it disdain alike to turn aside to the name of Theobald and of Pope. Let him read on through brightness and obscurity, through integrity and corruption; let him preserve his comprehension of the dialogue and his interest in the fable. And when the pleasures of novelty have ceased, let him attempt exactness, and read the commentators.

Particular passages are cleared by notes, but the general effect of the work is weakened. The mind is refrigerated by interruption; the thoughts are diverted from the principal subject; the reader is weary, he suspects not why; and at last throws away the book which he has too diligently studied.

Parts are not to be examined till the whole has been surveyed; there is a kind of intellectual remoteness necessary for the comprehension of any great work in its full design and in its true proportions; a close approach shows the smaller niceties, but the beauty of the whole is discerned no longer.

It is not very grateful to consider how little the succession of editors has added to this author's power of pleasing. He was read, admired, studied, and imitated, while he was yet deformed with all the improprieties which ignorance and neglect could accumulate upon him; while the reading was yet not rectified, nor his allusions understood, yet then did Dryden pronounce, "that Shakspeare was the man, who, of all modern and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of nature were still present to him, and he drew them not laboriously, but luckily: when he describes any thing, you more than see it, you feel it too. Those, who accuse him to have wanted learning, give him the greater commendation; he was naturally learned; he needed not

the spectacles of books to read nature; he looked inwards, and found her there. I cannot say he is every where alike; were he so, I should do him injury to compare him with the greatest of mankind. He is many times flat and insipid; his comick wit degenerating into clenches, his serious swelling into bombast. But he is always great, when some great occasion is presented to him: no man can say, he ever had a fit subject for his wit, and did not then raise himself as high above the rest of poets,

Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi."

It is to be lamented, that such a writer should want a commentary; that his language should become obsolete, or his sentiments obscure. But it is vain to carry wishes beyond the condition of human things; that which must happen to all, has happened to Shakspeare, by accident and time; and more than has been suffered by any other writer since the use of types, has been suffered by him through his own negligence of fame, or perhaps by that superiority of mind, which despised its own performances, when it compared them with its powers, and judged those works unworthy to be preserved, which the criticks of following ages were to contend for the fame of restoring and explaining.

Among these candidates of inferior fame, I am now to stand the judgment of the publick; and wish that I could confidently produce my commentary as equal to the encouragement which I have had the honour of receiving. Every work of this kind is by its nature deficient, and I should feel little solicitude about the sentence, were it to be pronounced only by the skilful and the learned.

Of what has been performed in this revisal*, an account is given in the following pages by Mr. Steevens, who might have spoken both of his own diligence and sagacity, in terms of greater self-approbation, without deviating from modesty or truth†. JOHNSON.

* This paragraph relates to the edition published in 1773, by George Steevens, Esq. MALONE.

† All prefatory matters being in the present edition printed according to the order of time in which they originally appeared, the Advertisement Dr. Johnson refers to, will be found immediately after Mr. Capell's Introduction. STEEVENS.

Dr. Johnson's Preface first appeared in 1765. BOSWELL.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

R E A D E R.

[Prefixed to Mr. Steevens's Edition of Twenty of the old Quarto
Copies of Shakspeare, &c. in 4 Vols. 8vo. 1766.]

THE plays of Shakspeare have been so often republished, with every seeming advantage which the joint labours of men of the first abilities could procure for them, that one would hardly imagine they could stand in need of any thing beyond the illustration of some few dark passages. Modes of expression must remain in obscurity, or be retrieved from time to time, as chance may throw the books of that age into the hands of criticks who shall make a proper use of them. Many have been of opinion that his language will continue difficult to all those who are unacquainted with the provincial expressions which they suppose him to have used; yet, for my own part, I cannot believe but that those which are now local may once have been universal, and must have been the language of those persons before whom his plays were represented. However, it is certain, that the instances of obscurity from this source are very few.

Some have been of opinion that even a particular syntax prevailed in the time of Shakspeare; but, as I do not recollect that any proofs were ever brought in support of that sentiment, I own I am of the contrary opinion.

In his time indeed a different arrangement of syllables had been introduced in imitation of the Latin, as we find in Ascham; and the verb was frequently kept back in the

sentence ; but in Shakspeare no marks of it are discernible ; and though the rules of syntax were more strictly observed by the writers of that age than they have been since, he of all the number is perhaps the most ungrammatical. To make his meaning intelligible to his audience seems to have been his only care, and with the ease of conversation he has adopted its incorrectness.

The past editors, eminently qualified as they were by genius and learning for this undertaking, wanted industry ; to cover which they published catalogues, transcribed at random, of a greater number of old copies than ever they can be supposed to have had in their possession ; when, at the same time, they never examined the few which we know they had, with any degree of accuracy. The last editor alone has dealt fairly with the world in this particular ; he professes to have made use of no more than he had really seen, and has annexed a list of such to every play, together with a complete one of those supposed to be in being, at the conclusion of his work, whether he had been able to procure them for the service of it or not.

For these reasons I thought it would not be unacceptable to the lovers of Shakspeare to collate all the quartos I could find, comparing one copy with the rest, where there were more than one of the same play ; and to multiply the chances of their being preserved, by collecting them into volumes, instead of leaving the few that have escaped, to share the fate of the rest, which was probably hastened by their remaining in the form of pamphlets, their use and value being equally unknown to those into whose hands they fell.

Of some I have printed more than one copy ; as there are many persons, who, not contented with the possession of a finished picture of some great master, are desirous to procure the first sketch that was made for it, that they may have the pleasure of tracing the progress of the artist from the first light colouring to the finishing stroke. To such the earlier editions of *King John*, *Henry the Fifth*, *Henry the Sixth*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, will, I apprehend, not be unwelcome ; since in these we may discern as much as will be found in the hasty outlines of the pencil, with a fair prospect of that perfection to which he brought every performance he took the pains to retouch.

The general character of the quarto editions may more

advantageously be taken from the words of Mr. Pope, than from any recommendation of my own.

“The folio edition (says he) in which all the plays we now receive as his were first collected, was published by two players, Heminges and Condell, in 1623, seven years after his decease. They declare that all the other editions were stolen and surreptitious*, and affirm theirs to be purged from the errors of the former. This is true as to the literal errors, and no other; for in all respects else it is far worse than the quartos.

“First, because the additions of trifling and bombast passages are in this edition far more numerous. For whatever had been added since those quartos by the actors, or had stolen from their mouths into the written parts, were from thence conveyed into the printed text, and all stand charged upon the author. He himself complained of this usage in *Hamlet*, where he wishes “those who play the clowns would speak no more than is set down for them.” (Act III. Sc. IV.) But as a proof that he could not escape it, in the old editions of *Romeo and Juliet*, there is no hint of the mean conceits and ribaldries now to be found there. In others the scenes of the mobs, plebeians, and clowns, are vastly shorter than at present; and I have seen one in particular (which seems to have belonged to the play-house, by having the parts divided by lines, and the actors’ names in the margin,) where several of those very passages were added in a written hand, which since are to be found in the folio.

“In the next place, a number of beautiful passages were omitted, which were extant in the first single editions; as it seems without any other reason than their willingness to shorten some scenes.”

To this I must add, that I cannot help looking on the folio as having suffered other injuries from the licentious alteration of the players; as we frequently find it in an unusual word changed into one more popular; sometimes to the weakening of the sense, which rather seems to have been their work, who knew that plainness was necessary

* It may be proper on this occasion to observe, that the actors printed several of the plays in their folio edition from the very quarto copies which they are here striving to depreciate; and additional corruption is the utmost that these copies gained by passing through their hands.

for the audience of an illiterate age, than that it was done by the consent of the author: for he would hardly have unnerved a line in his written copy, which they pretend to have transcribed, however he might have permitted many to have been familiarized in the representation. Were I to indulge my own private conjecture, I should suppose that his blotted manuscripts were read over by one to another among those who were appointed to transcribe them; and hence it would easily happen, that words of similar sound, though of senses directly opposite, might be confounded with each other. They themselves declare that Shakspeare's time of blotting was past, and yet half the errors we find in their edition could not be merely typographical. Many of the quartos (as our own printers assure me) were far from being unskilfully executed, and some of them were much more correctly printed than the folio, which was published at the charge of the same proprietors, whose names we find prefixed to the older copies; and I cannot join with Mr. Pope in acquitting that edition of more literal errors than those which went before it. The particles in it seem to be as fortuitously disposed, and proper names as frequently undistinguished by Italick or capital letters from the rest of the text. The punctuation is equally accidental; nor do I see on the whole any greater marks of a skilful revisal, or the advantage of being printed from unblotted originals, in the one, than in the other. One reformation indeed there seems to have been made, and that very laudable; I mean the substitution of more general terms for a name too often unnecessarily invoked on the stage; but no jot of obscenity is omitted: and their caution against profaneness is, in my opinion, the only thing for which we are indebted to the judgment of the editors of the folio*.

How much may be done by the assistance of the old copies will now be easily known; but a more difficult

* ———and their caution against profaneness is, in my opinion, the only thing for which we are indebted to the editors of the folio.] I doubt whether we are so much indebted to the *judgment* of the editors of the folio edition, for their caution against profaneness, as to the statute 3 Jac. I. c. 21, which prohibits under severe penalties the use of the sacred name in any plays or interludes. This occasioned the playhouse copies to be altered, and they printed from the playhouse copies. BLACKSTONE.

task remains behind, which calls for other abilities than are requisite in the laborious collator.

From a diligent perusal of the comedies of contemporary authors, I am persuaded that the meaning of many expressions in Shakspeare might be retrieved; for the language of conversation can only be expected to be preserved in works, which in their time assumed the merit of being pictures of men and manners. The style of conversation we may suppose to be as much altered as that of books; and, in consequence of the change, we have no other authorities to recur to in either case. Should our language ever be recalled to a strict examination, and the fashion become general of striving to maintain our old acquisitions, instead of gaining new ones, which we shall be at last obliged to give up, or be incumbered with their weight; it will then be lamented that no regular collection was ever formed of the old English books; from which, as from ancient repositories, we might recover words and phrases as often as caprice or wantonness should call for variety; instead of thinking it necessary to adopt new ones, or barter solid strength for feeble splendour, which no language has long admitted, and retained its purity.

We wonder that, before the time of Shakspeare, we find the stage in a state so barren of productions, but forget that we have hardly any acquaintance with the authors of that period, though some few of their dramatick pieces may remain. The same might be almost said of the interval between that age and the age of Dryden, the performances of which, not being preserved in sets, or diffused as now, by the greater number printed, must lapse apace into the same obscurity.

Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona
Multi —.

And yet we are contented, from a few specimens only, to form our opinions of the genius of ages gone before us. Even while we are blaming the taste of that audience which received with applause the worst plays in the reign of Charles the Second, we should consider that the few in possession of our theatre, which would never have been heard a second time had they been written now, were probably the best of hundreds which had been dismissed with general censure. The collection of plays, interludes,

&c. made by Mr. Garrick, with an intent to deposit them hereafter in some public library*, will be considered as a valuable acquisition; for pamphlets have never yet been examined with a proper regard to posterity. Most of the obsolete pieces will be found on enquiry to have been introduced into libraries but some few years since; and yet those of the present age, which may one time or other prove as useful, are still entirely neglected. I should be remiss, I am sure, were I to forget my acknowledgments to the gentleman I have just mentioned, to whose benevolence I owe the use of several of the scarcest quartos, which I could not otherwise have obtained; though I advertised for them, with sufficient offers, as I thought, either to tempt the casual owner to sell, or the curious to communicate them; but Mr. Garrick's zeal would not permit him to withhold any thing that might ever so remotely tend to show the perfections of that author who could only have enabled him to display his own.

It is not merely to obtain justice to Shakspeare, that I have made this collection, and advise others to be made. The general interests of English literature, and the attention due to our own language and history, require that our ancient writings should be diligently reviewed. There is no age which has not produced some works that deserved to be remembered; and as words and phrases are only understood by comparing them in different places, the lower writers must be read for the explanation of the highest. No language can be ascertained and settled, but by deducing its words from their original sources, and tracing them through their successive varieties of signification; and this deduction can only be performed by consulting the earliest and intermediate authors.

Enough has been already done to encourage us to do more. Dr. Hickes, by reviving the study of the Saxon language, seems to have excited a stronger curiosity after old English writers, than ever had appeared before. Many volumes which were mouldering in dust have been collected; many authors which were forgotten have been revived; many laborious catalogues have been formed; and many judicious glossaries compiled; the literary transactions of the darker ages are now open to discovery; and

* This collection is now, in pursuance of Mr. Garrick's Will, placed in the British Museum. REED.

the language in its intermediate gradations, from the Conquest to the Restoration, is better understood than in any former time.

To incite the continuance, and encourage the extension of this domestick curiosity, is one of the purposes of the present publication. In the plays it contains, the poet's first thoughts as well as words are preserved; the additions made in subsequent impressions, distinguished in Italicks, and the performances themselves make their appearance with every typographical error, such as they were before they fell into the hands of the player-editors. The various readings, which can only be attributed to chance, are set down among the rest, as I did not choose arbitrarily to determine for others which were useless, or which were valuable. And many words differing only by the spelling, or serving merely to show the difficulties which they to whose lot it first fell to disentangle their perplexities must have encountered, are exhibited with the rest. I must acknowledge that some few readings have slipped in by mistake, which can pretend to serve no purpose of illustration, but were introduced by confining myself to note the minutest variations of the copies, which soon convinced me that the oldest were in general the most correct. Though no proof can be given that the poet superintended the publication of any one of these himself, yet we have little reason to suppose that he who wrote at the command of Elizabeth, and under the patronage of Southampton, was so very negligent of his fame, as to permit the most incompetent judges, such as the players were, to vary at their pleasure what he had set down for the first single editions: and we have better grounds for suspicion that his works did materially suffer from their presumptuous corrections after his death.

It is very well known, that before the time of Shakespeare, the art of making title-pages was practised with as much, or perhaps more success than it has been since. Accordingly, to all his plays we find long and descriptive ones, which, when they were first published, were of great service to the venders of them. Pamphlets of every kind were hawked about the streets by a set of people resembling his own Autolycus, who proclaimed aloud the qualities of what they offered to sale, and might draw in many a purchaser by the mirth he was taught to expect from

“ the humours of Corporal Nym, or the swaggering vaine of Auncient Pistoll,” who was not to be tempted by the representation of a fact merely historical. The players, however, laid aside the whole of this garniture, not finding it so necessary to procure success to a bulky volume, when the author’s reputation was established, as it had been to bespeak attention to a few straggling pamphlets while it was yet uncertain.

The sixteen plays which are not in these volumes, remained unpublished till the folio in the year 1623, though the compiler of a work called Theatrical Records, mentions different single editions of them all before that time. But as no one of the editors could ever meet with such, nor has any one else pretended to have seen them, I think myself at liberty to suppose the compiler supplied the defects of the list out of his own imagination; since he must have had singular good fortune to have been possessed of two or three different copies of all, when neither editors nor collectors, in the course of near fifty years, have been able so much as to obtain the sight of one of the number*.

At the end of the last volume I have added a tragedy of King Leir, published before that of Shakspeare, which it is not improbable he might have seen, as the father kneeling to the daughter, when she kneels to ask his blessing, is found in it; a circumstance two poets were not very likely to have hit on separately; and which seems borrowed by the latter with his usual judgment, it being the most natural passage in the whole play; and is introduced in such a manner, as to make it fairly his own. The ingenious editor of *The Reliques of Ancient English*

* It will be obvious to every one acquainted with the ancient English language, that in almost all the titles of plays in this catalogue of Mr. William Rufus Chetwood, the spelling is constantly overcharged with such a superfluity of letters as is not to be found in the writings of Shakspeare or his contemporaries. A more bungling attempt at a forgery was never obtruded on the publick. See the *British Theatre*, 1750; reprinted by Dodsley in 1756, under the title of “*Theatrical Records, or an Account of English Dramatick Authors, and their Works*,” where all that is said concerning an Advertisement at the end of *Romeo and Juliet*, 1597, is equally false, no copy of that play having been ever published by Andrew Wise.

Poetry having never met with this play, and as it is not preserved in Mr. Garrick's collection, I thought it a curiosity worthy the notice of the publick.

I have likewise reprinted Shakspeare's Sonnets, from a copy published in 1609, by G. Eld, one of the printers of his plays; which, added to the consideration that they made their appearance with his name, and in his life-time, seems to be no slender proof of their authenticity. The same evidence might operate in favour of several more plays which are omitted here, out of respect to the judgment of those who had omitted them before*.

It is to be wished that some method of publication most favourable to the character of an author were once established; whether we are to send into the world all his works without distinction, or arbitrarily to leave out what may be thought a disgrace to him. The first editors, who rejected *Pericles*, retained *Titus Andronicus*; and Mr. Pope, without any reason, named *The Winter's Tale*, a play that bears the strongest marks of the hand of Shakspeare, among those which he supposed to be spurious. Dr. Warburton has fixed a stigma on the three parts of *Henry the Sixth*, and some others:

Inde Dolabella, est, atque hinc Antonius:

and all have been willing to plunder Shakspeare, or mix up "a breed of barren metal" with his purest ore.

Joshua Barnes, the editor of *Euripides*, thought every scrap of his author so sacred, that he has preserved with the name of one of his plays, the only remaining word of it. The same reason indeed might be given in his favour, which caused the preservation of that valuable trisyllable; which is, that it cannot be found in any other place in the Greek language. But this does not seem to have been his only motive, as we find he has to the full as carefully published several detached and broken sentences, the gleanings from scholiasts, which have no claim to merit of that kind; and yet the author's works might be reckoned by some to be incomplete without them. If then this duty is expected from every editor of a Greek or

* *Lochrine*, 1595. *Sir John Oldcastle*, 1600. *London Prodigal*, 1605. *Pericles*, *Prince of Tyre*, 1609. *Puritan*, 1600. *Thomas Lord Cromwell*, 1613. *Yorkshire Tragedy*, 1608.

Roman poet, why is not the same insisted on in respect of an English classick? But if the custom of preserving all, whether worthy of it or not, be "more honoured in the breach, than the observance," the suppression at least should not be considered as a fault. The publication of such things as Swift had written merely to raise a laugh among his friends, has added something to the bulk of his works, but very little to his character as a writer. The four volumes * that came out since Dr. Hawkesworth's edition, not to look on them as a tax levied on the publick, (which I think one might without injustice,) contain not more than sufficient to have made one of real value; and there is a kind of disingenuity, not to give it a harsher title, in exhibiting what the author never meant should see the light; for no motive, but a sordid one, can betray the survivors to make that publick, which they themselves must be of opinion will be unfavourable to the memory of the dead.

Life does not often receive good unmixed with evil. The benefits of the art of printing are depraved by the facility with which scandal may be diffused, and secrets revealed; and by the temptation by which traffick solicits avarice to betray the weaknesses of passion, or the confidence of friendship.

I cannot forbear to think these posthumous publications injurious to society. A man conscious of literary reputation will grow in time afraid to write with tenderness to his sister, or with fondness to his child; or to remit on the slightest occasion, or most pressing exigence, the rigour of critical choice, and grammatical severity. That esteem which preserves his letters, will at last produce his disgrace; when that which he wrote to his friend or his daughter shall be laid open to the publick.

There is perhaps sufficient evidence, that most of the plays in question, unequal as they may be to the rest, were written by Shakspeare; but the reason generally given for publishing the less correct pieces of an author, that it affords a more impartial view of a man's talents or way of thinking, than when we only see him in form, and prepared for our reception, is not enough to condemn an editor who thinks and practises otherwise. For what is

* Volumes xiii. xiv. xv. and xvi. in large 8vo. Nine more have since been added. REED.

all this to show, but that every man is more dull at one time than another? a fact which the world would easily have admitted, without asking any proofs in its support that might be destructive to an author's reputation.

To conclude; if the work, which this publication was meant to facilitate, has been already performed, the satisfaction of knowing it to be so may be obtained from hence; if otherwise, let those who raised expectations of correctness, and through negligence defeated them, be justly exposed by future editors, who will now be in possession of by far the greatest part of what they might have enquired after for years to no purpose; for in respect of such a number of the old quartos as are here exhibited, the first folio is a common book. This advantage will at least arise, that future editors having equally recourse to the same copies, can challenge distinction and preference only by genius, capacity, industry, and learning.

As I have only collected materials for future artists, I consider what I have been doing as no more than an apparatus for their use. If the publick is inclined to receive it as such, I am amply rewarded for my trouble; if otherwise, I shall submit with cheerfulness to the censure which should equitably fall on an injudicious attempt; having this consolation, however, that my design amounted to no more than a wish to encourage others to think of preserving the oldest editions of the English writers, which are growing scarcer every day; and to afford the world all the assistance or pleasure it can receive from the most authentick copies extant of its NOBLEST POET*.

G. S.

* As the foregoing Advertisement appeared when its author was young and uninformed, he cannot now abide by many sentiments expressed in it: nor would it have been here reprinted, but in compliance with Dr. Johnson's injunction, that all the relative Prefaces should continue to attend his edition of our author's plays. STEEVENS.

MR. CAPELL'S

INTRODUCTION*.

IT is said of the ostrich, that she drops her egg at random, to be dispos'd of as chance pleases; either brought to maturity by the sun's kindly warmth, or else crush'd by beasts and the feet of passers-by: such, at least, is the account which naturalists have given us of this extraordinary bird; and admitting it for a truth, she is in this a fit emblem of almost every great genius: they conceive and produce with ease those noble issues of human understanding; but incubation, the dull work of putting them correctly upon paper and afterwards publishing, is a task they cannot away with. If the original state of all such authors' writings, even from Homer downward, could be enquir'd into and known, they would yield proof in abundance of the justness of what is here asserted: but the author now before us shall suffice for them all; being at once the greatest instance of genius in producing noble things, and of negligence in providing for them afterwards. This negligence indeed was so great, and the condition in which his works are come down to us so very deform'd, that it has, of late years, induc'd several gentlemen to make a revision of them: but the publick seems not to be satisfy'd with any of their endeavours; and the reason of it's discontent will be manifest, when the state of his old editions, and the methods that they have taken to amend them, are fully lay'd open, which is the first business of this Introduction.

* Dr. Johnson's opinion of this performance may be known from the following passage in Mr. Boswell's Life of Dr. Johnson, second edit. vol. iii. p. 251: "If the man would have come to me, I would have endeavoured to endow his purpose with words, for as it is, he doth gabble monstrously." STEEVENS.

Of thirty-six plays which Shakspeare has left us, and which compose the collection that was afterwards set out in folio; thirteen only were publish'd in his life-time, that have much resemblance to those in the folio; these thirteen are—"Hamlet, First and Second Henry IV. King Lear, Love's Labour's Lost, Merchant of Venice, Midsummer-Night's Dream, Much Ado about Nothing, Richard II. and III. Romeo and Juliet, Titus Andronicus, and Troilus and Cressida." Some others, that came out in the same period, bear indeed the titles of—"Henry V. King John, Merry Wives of Windsor, and Taming of the Shrew*;" but are no other than either first draughts, or mutilated and perhaps surreptitious impressions of those plays, but whether of the two is not easy to determine: King John is certainly a first draught, and in two parts; and so much another play, that only one line of it is retain'd in the second: there is also a first draught of the Second and Third Parts of Henry VI. published in his life-time under the following title,—The whole Contention betweene the two famous Houses, Lancaster and Yorke: and to these plays, six in number, may be added—the first impression of Romeo and Juliet, being a play of the same stamp: The date of all these quarto's, and that of their several re-impressions, may be seen in a table that follows the Introduction. Othello came out only one year before the folio; and is, in the main, the same play that we have there: and this too is the case of the first-mention'd thirteen; notwithstanding there are in many of them great variations, and particularly in Hamlet, King Lear, Richard III. and Romeo and Juliet.

As for the plays, which, we say, are either the poet's first draughts, or else imperfect and stolen copies, it will

* This is meant of the first quarto edition of *The Taming of the Shrew*; for the second was printed from the folio. But the play in this first edition appears certainly to have been a spurious one, from Mr. Pope's account of it, who seems to have been the only editor whom it was ever seen by: great pains has been taken to trace who he had it of, (for it was not in his collection) but without success.

[Mr. Capell afterwards procured a sight of this desideratum, a circumstance which he has quaintly recorded in a note annexed to the MS. catalogue of his *Shaksperiana*: "—lent by Mr. Malone, an Irish gentleman, living in Queen Ann Street East."

STEEVENS.]

be thought, perhaps, they might as well have been left out of the account: but they are not wholly useless; some *lacunæ*, that are in all the other editions, have been judiciously fill'd up in modern impressions by the authority of these copies; and in some particular passages of them, where there happens to be a greater conformity than usual between them and the more perfect editions, there is here and there a various reading that does honour to the poet's judgment, and should upon that account be presum'd the true one; in other respects, they have neither use nor merit, but are merely curiosities.

Proceed we then to a description of the other fourteen. They all abound in faults, though not in equal degree; and those faults are so numerous, and of so many different natures, that nothing but a perusal of the pieces themselves can give an adequate conception of them; but amongst them are these that follow. Division of acts and scenes, they have none; Othello only excepted, which is divided into acts: entries of persons are extremely imperfect in them (sometimes more, sometimes fewer than the scene requires), and their Exits are very often omitted; or, when mark'd, not always in the right place; and few scenical directions are to be met with throughout the whole: speeches are frequently confounded, and given to wrong persons, either whole, or in part; and sometimes, instead of the person speaking, you have the actor who presented him: and in two of the plays, (*Love's Labour's Lost*, and *Troilus and Cressida*,) the same matter, and in nearly the same words, is set down twice in some passages; which who sees not to be only a negligence of the poet, and that but one of them ought to have been printed? But the reigning fault of all is in the measure: prose is very often printed as verse, and verse as prose; or, where rightly printed verse, that verse is not always right divided: and in all these pieces, the songs are in every particular still more corrupt than the other parts of them. These are the general and principal defects: to which, if you add—transposition of words, sentences, lines, and even speeches; words omitted, and others added without reason; and a punctuation so deficient, and so often wrong, that it hardly deserves regard; you have, upon the whole, a true but melancholy picture of the condition of these first printed plays: which, bad as it is, is yet better than that of those which came after; or than that of the sub-

sequent folio impression of some of these which we are now speaking of.

This folio impression was sent into the world seven years after the author's death, by two of his fellow-players; and contains, besides the last mention'd fourteen, the true and genuine copies of the other six plays, and sixteen that were never publish'd before *: the editors make great professions of fidelity, and some complaint of injury done to them and the author by stolen and maim'd copies; giving withal an advantageous, if just, idea of the copies which they have follow'd: but see the terms they make use of. "It had bene a thing, we confesse, worthie to have bene wished, that the author himselfe had liv'd to have set forth, and overseen his owne writings; but since it hath bin ordain'd otherwise, and he by death departed from that right, we pray you do not envie his friends, the office of their care, and paine, to have collected & publish'd them; and so to have publish'd them, as where (before) you were abus'd with diverse stolne, and surreptitious copies, maimed, and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of injurious impostors, that expos'd them: even those, are now offer'd to your view cur'd, and perfect of their limbes; and all the rest, absolute in their numbers, as he conceived them. Who, as he was a happie imitator of nature, was a most gentle expresser of it. His minde and hand went together: and what he thought, he uttered with that easinesse, that wee have scarce received from him a blot in his papers." Who now does not feel himself inclin'd to expect an accurate and good performance in the edition of these prefacers? But alas, it is nothing less: for (if we except the six spurious ones, whose places were then supply'd by true and genuine copies) the editions of plays preceding the folio, are the very basis of

* There is yet extant in the books of the Stationers' Company, an entry bearing date—Feb. 12, 1624, to Messrs. Jaggard and Blount, the proprietors of this first folio, which is thus worded: "Mr. Wm. Shakespear's Comedy's History's & Tragedy's so many of the said Copy's as bee not enter'd to other men:" and this entry is follow'd by the titles of all those sixteen plays that were first printed in the folio: The other twenty plays (Othello, and King John, excepted; which the person who furnished this transcript, thinks he may have overlook'd,) are enter'd too in these books, under their respective years; but to whom the transcript says not.

those we have there; which are either printed from those editions, or from the copies which they made use of; and this is principally evident in—"First and Second Henry IV. Love's Labour's Lost, Merchant of Venice, Midsummer-Night's Dream, Much Ado about Nothing, Richard II. Titus Andronicus, and Troilus and Cressida;" for in the others we see somewhat a greater latitude, as was observ'd a little above: but in these plays, there is an almost strict conformity between the two impressions: some additions are in the second, and some omissions; but the faults and errors of the quarto's are all preserv'd in the folio, and others added to them; and what difference there is, is generally for the worse on the side of the folio editors; which should give us but faint hopes of meeting with greater accuracy in the plays which they first publish'd; and, accordingly, we find them subject to all the imperfections that have been noted in the former: nor is their edition in general distinguish'd by any mark of preference above the earliest quarto's, but that some of their plays are divided into acts, and some others into acts and scenes; and that with due precision, and agreeable to the author's idea of the nature of such divisions. The order of printing these plays, the way in which they are class'd, and the titles given them, being matters of some curiosity, the table that is before the first folio is here reprinted: and to it are added marks, put between crotchets, shewing the plays that are divided; *a* signifying —acts, *a & s*—acts and scenes.

TABLE of Plays in the Folio†.

COMEDIES.

The Tempest. [<i>a & s.</i>]	Midsommer Nights Dreame.*
The Two Gentlemen of Verona.* [<i>a & s.</i>]	[<i>a.</i>]
The Merry Wives of Windsor. [<i>a & s.</i>]	The Merchant of Venice.* [<i>a.</i>]
Measure for Measure. [<i>a & s.</i>]	As you like it. [<i>a & s.</i>]
The Comedy of Errours.* [<i>a.</i>]	The Taming of the Shrew.
Much adoo about Nothing. [<i>a.</i>]	All is well, that Ends well. [<i>a.</i>]
Loves Labour lost.*	Twelfe-Night, or what you will. [<i>a & s.</i>]
	The Winters Tale. [<i>a & s.</i>]

† The plays, mark'd with asterisks, are spoken of by name, in a book, call'd—Wit's Treasury, being the Second Part of Wit's

HISTORIES.

The Life and Death of King John.* [<i>a & s.</i>]	The First part of King Henry the Sixt.
The Life & Death of Richard the second.* [<i>a & s.</i>]	The Second part of King Hen. the Sixt.
The First part of King Henry the fourth. [<i>a & s.</i>]	The Third part of King Henry the Sixt.
The Second Part of K. Henry the fourth.* [<i>a & s.</i>]	The Life & Death of Richard the Third.* [<i>a & s.</i>]
The Life of King Henry the Fift.	The Life of King Henry the Eight. [<i>a & s.</i>]

TRAGEDIES.

[Troilus and Cressida] from the second folio; omitted in the first.	The Tragedy of Macbeth. [<i>a & s.</i>]
The Tragedy of Coriolanus. [<i>a.</i>]	The Tragedy of Hamlet.
Titus Andronicus.* [<i>a.</i>]	King Lear. [<i>a & s.</i>]
Romeo and Juliet.*	Othello, the Moore of Venice. [<i>a & s.</i>]
Timon of Athens.	Antony and Cleopater.
The Life and death of Julius Cæsar. [<i>a.</i>]	Cymbeline King of Britaine. [<i>a & s.</i>]

Commonwealth, written by Francis Meres, at p. 282: who, in the same paragraph, mentions another play as being Shakspeare's, under the title of Loves Labours Wonne; a title that seems well adapted to All's Well that Ends Well, and under which it might be first acted. In the paragraph immediately preceding, he speaks of his Venus and Adonis, his Lucrece, and his Sonnets: this book was printed in 1598, by P. Short, for Cuthbert Burbie; octavo, small. The same author, at p. 283, mentions too a Richard the Third, written by Doctor Leg, author of another play, called The Destruction of Jerusalem. And there is in the Musæum, a manuscript Latin play upon the same subject, written by one Henry Lacy in 1586: which Latin play is but a weak performance; and yet seemeth to be the play spoken of by Sir John Harrington, (for the author was a Cambridge man, and of St. John's,) in this passage of his Apologie of Poetrie, prefix'd to his translation of Ariosto's Orlando, edit. 1591, fol.: "—and for tragedies, to omit other famous tragedies; that, that was played at S. Johns in Cambridge of Richard the 3. would move (I thinke) Phalaris the tyraunt, and terrifie all tyrānous minded men, frō following their foolish ambitious humors, seeing how his ambition made him kill his brother, his nephews, his wife, beside infinit others; and last of all after a short and troublesome raigne, to end his miserable life, and to have his body harried after his death."

Having premis'd thus much about the state and condition of these first copies, it may not be improper, nor will it be absolutely a digression, to add something concerning their authenticity: in doing which, it will be greatly for the reader's ease,—and our own, to confine ourselves to the quarto's: which, it is hop'd, he will allow of; especially, as our intended vindication of them will also include in it (to the eye of a good observer) that of the plays that appear'd first in the folio: which therefore omitting, we now turn ourselves to the quarto's.

We have seen the slur that is endeavour'd to be thrown upon them indiscriminately by the player editors, and we see it too wip'd off by their having themselves follow'd the copies that they condemn. A modern editor, who is not without his followers, is pleas'd to assert confidently in his preface, that they are printed from “piece-meal parts, and copies of prompters:” but his arguments for it are some of them without foundation, and the others not conclusive; and it is to be doubted, that the opinion is only thrown out to countenance an abuse that has been carry'd to much too great lengths by himself and another editor,—that of putting out of the text passages that they did not like. These censures then, and this opinion being set aside, is it criminal to try another conjecture, and see what can be made of it? It is known, that Shakspeare liv'd to no great age, being taken off in his fifty-third year; and yet his works are so numerous, that, when we take a survey of them, they seem the productions of a life of twice that length: for to the thirty-six plays in this collection, we must add seven, (one of which is in two parts,) perhaps written over again*; seven others that were publish'd some of them in his life-time, and all with his name; and another seven, that are upon good grounds imputed to him; making in all, fifty-eight plays; besides the part that he may reasonably be thought to have had in other men's labours, being himself a player and a manager of theatres: what his prose productions were, we know not: but it can hardly be suppos'd, that he, who had so considerable a share in the confidence of the Earls of Essex and Southampton, could be a mute spectator only of controversies, in which they were so much interested; and his other poetical works, that are known, will fill a volume the size of these that we have here. When the

* Vide, this Introduction, p. 121.

number and bulk of these pieces, the shortness of his life, and the other busy employments of it are reflected upon duly, can it be a wonder that he should be so loose a transcriber of them? or why should we refuse to give credit to what his companions tell us, of the state of those transcriptions, and of the facility with which they were pen'd? Let it then be granted, that these quarto's are the poet's own copies, however they were come by; hastily written at first, and issuing from presses most of them as corrupt and licentious as can any where be produc'd, and not overseen by himself, nor by any of his friends: and there can be no stronger reason for subscribing to any opinion, than may be drawn in favour of this from the condition of all the other plays that were first printed in the folio; for, in method of publication, they have the greatest likeness possible to those which preceded them, and carry all the same marks of haste and negligence: yet the genuineness of the latter is attested by those who publish'd them, and no proof brought to invalidate their testimony. If it be still ask'd, what then becomes of the accusation brought against the quarto's by the player editors, the answer is not so far off as may perhaps be expected: it may be true that they were "stoln;" but stoln from the author's copies, by transcribers who found means to get at them*: and "maim'd" they must needs be, in respect of their many alterations after the first performance: and who knows, if the difference that is between them, in some of the plays that are common to them both, has not been studiously heighten'd by the player editors,—who had the means in their power, being masters of all the alterations,—to give at once a greater currency to their own lame edition, and support the charge which they bring against the quarto's? this, at least, is a probable opinion, and no bad way of accounting for those differences†.

* But see a note at p. 123, which seems to infer that they were fairly come by: which is, in truth, the editor's opinion, at least of some of them; though, in way of argument, and for the sake of clearness, he has here admitted the charge in that full extent in which they bring it.

† Some of these alterations are in the quarto's themselves; (another proof this, of their being authentick,) as in Richard II.: where a large scene, that of the king's deposing, appears first in the copy of 1608, the third quarto impression, being wanting in

It were easy to add abundance of other arguments in favour of these quarto's;—Such as, their exact affinity to almost all the publications of this sort that came out about that time; of which it will hardly be asserted by any reasoning man, that they are all clandestine copies, and publish'd without their authors' consent: next, the high improbability of supposing that none of these plays were of the poet's own setting-out: whose case is render'd singular by such a supposition; it being certain, that every other author of the time, without exception, who wrote any thing largely, publish'd some of his plays himself, and Ben Jonson all of them: nay, the very errors and faults of these quarto's,—of some of them at least, and those such as are brought against them by other arguers,—are, with the editor, proofs of their genuineness; for from what hand, but that of the author himself, could come those seemingly-strange repetitions which are spoken of at p. 122? those imperfect exits, and entries of persons who have no concern in the play at all, neither in the scene where they are made to enter, nor in any other part of it? yet such there are in several of these quarto's; and such might well be expected in the hasty draughts of so negligent an author, who neither saw at once all he might want, nor, in some instances, gave himself sufficient time to consider the fitness of what he was then penning. These and other like arguments might, as is said before, be collected, and urg'd for the plays that were first publish'd in the quarto's; that is, for fourteen of them, for the other six are out of the question: but what has been enlarg'd upon above, of their being follow'd by the folio, and their apparent general likeness to all the other plays that are in that collection, is so very forcible as to be

the two former: and in one copy of 2 Henry IV. there is a scene too that is not in the other, though of the same year; it is the first of Act the third. And Hamlet has some still more considerable; for the copy of 1605 has these words:—"Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect Coppie:" now though no prior copy has yet been produc'd, it is certain there was such by the testimony of this title-page: and that the play was in being at least nine years before, is prov'd by a book of Doctor Lodge's printed in 1596; which play was perhaps an imperfect one; and not unlike that we have now of Romeo and Juliet, printed the year after; a fourth instance too of what the note advances.

sufficient of itself to satisfy the unprejudic'd, that the plays of both impressions spring all from the same stock, and owe their numerous imperfections to one common origin and cause,—the too-great negligence and haste of their over-careless producer.

But to return to the thing immediately treated,—the state of the old editions. The quarto's went through many impressions, as may be seen in the Table: and, in each play, the last is generally taken from the impression next before it, and so onward to the first; the few that come not within this rule, are taken notice of in the Table: and this further is to be observ'd of them: that, generally speaking, the more distant they are from the original, the more they abound in faults; 'till, in the end, the corruptions of the last copies become so excessive, as to make them of hardly any worth. The folio too had it's re-impressions, the dates and notices of which are likewise in the Table, and they tread the same round as did the quarto's: only that the third of them has seven plays more, (see their titles below*,) in which it is fol-

* Locrine; The London Prodigal; Pericles, Prince of Tyre; The Puritan, or, the Widow of Watling Street; Sir John Oldcastle; Thomas Lord Cromwell; and The Yorkshire Tragedy: And the imputed ones, mention'd a little above, are these;—The Arraignment of Paris; Birth of Merlin; Fair Em; Edward III.; Merry Devil of Edmonton; Mucedorus; and The Two Noble Kinsmen: but in The Merry Devil of Edmonton, Rowley is call'd his partner in the title-page; and Fletcher, in The Two Noble Kinsmen. What external proofs there are of their coming from Shakspeare, are gather'd all together, and put down in the Table; and further it not concerns us to engage: but let those who are inclin'd to dispute it, carry this along with them:—that London, in Shakspeare's time, had a multitude of playhouses; erected some in inn-yards, and such like places, and frequented by the lowest of the people; such audiences might have been seen some years ago in Southwark and Bartholomew, and may be seen at this day in the country; to which it was also a custom for players to make excursion, at wake times and festivals: and for such places, and such occasions, might these pieces be compos'd in the author's early time; the worst of them suiting well enough to the parties they might be made for:—and this, or something nearly of this sort, may have been the case too of some plays in his great collection, which shall be spoken of in their place.

low'd by the last ; and that again by the first of the modern impressions, which come now to be spoken of.

If the stage be a mirror of the times, as undoubtedly it is, and we judge of the age's temper by what we see prevailing there, what must we think of the times that succeeded Shakspeare? Jonson, favour'd by a court that delighted only in masques, had been gaining ground upon him even in his life-time ; and his death put him in full possession of a post he had long aspir'd to, the empire of the drama : the props of this new king's throne, were—Fletcher, Shirley, Middleton, Massinger, Broome, and others ; and how unequal they all were, the monarch and his subjects too, to the poet they came after, let their works testify : yet they had the vogue on their side, during all those blessed times that preceded the civil war, and Shakspeare was held in disesteem. The war, and medley government that follow'd, swept all these things away : but they were restor'd with the king ; and another stage took place, in which Shakspeare had little share. Dryden had then the lead, and maintain'd it for half a century : though his government was sometimes disputed by Lee, Tate, Shadwell, Wytcherley, and others ; weaken'd much by *The Rehearsal* ; and quite overthrown in the end by *Otway*, and *Rowe* : what the cast of their plays was, is known to every one : but that Shakspeare, the true and genuine Shakspeare, was not much relish'd, is plain from the many alterations of him, that were brought upon the stage by some of those gentlemen, and by others within that period.

But, from what has been said, we are not to conclude—that the poet had no admirers : for the contrary is true ; and he had in all this interval no inconsiderable party amongst men of the greatest understanding, who both saw his merit, in despite of the darkness it was then wrapt up in, and spoke loudly in his praise ; but the stream of the publick favour ran the other way. But this too coming about at the time we are speaking of, there was a demand for his works, and in a form that was more convenient than the folio's : in consequence of which, the gentleman last mentioned was set to work by the booksellers ; and, in 1709, he put out an edition in six volumes octavo, which, unhappily, is the basis of all the other moderns : for this editor went no further than to the edition nearest to him in time, which was the folio of

1685, the last and worst of those impressions : this he republish'd with great exactness ; correcting here and there some of it's grossest mistakes, and dividing into acts and scenes the plays that were not divided before.

But no sooner was this edition in the hands of the publick, than they saw in part its deficiencies, and one of another sort began to be required of them ; which accordingly was set about some years after by two gentlemen at once, Mr. Pope and Mr. Theobald. The labours of the first came out in 1725, in six volumes quarto : and he has the merit of having first improv'd his author, by the insertion of many large passages, speeches, and single lines, taken from the quarto's ; and of amending him in other places, by readings fetch'd from the same : but his materials were few, and his collation of them not the most careful ; which, join'd to other faults, and to that main one—of making his predecessor's the copy himself follow'd, brought his labours in disrepute, and has finally sunk them in neglect.

His publication retarded the other gentleman, and he did not appear 'till the year 1733, when his work too came out in seven volumes, octavo. The opposition that was between them seems to have enflam'd him, which was heighten'd by other motives, and he declaims vehemently against the work of his antagonist : which yet serv'd him for a model ; and his own is made only a little better, by his having a few more materials ; of which he was not a better collator than the other, nor did he excel him in use of them ; for, in this article, both their judgments may be equally call'd in question ; in what he has done that is conjectural, he is rather more happy : but in this he had large assistances.

But the gentleman that came next, is a critick of another stamp : and pursues a track, in which it is greatly to be hop'd he will never be follow'd in the publication of any authors whatsoever : for this were, in effect, to annihilate them, if carry'd a little further ; by destroying all marks of peculiarity and notes of time, all easiness of expression and numbers, all justness of thought, and the nobility of not a few of their conceptions : The manner in which his author is treated, excites an indignation that will be thought by some to vent itself too strongly : but terms weaker would do injustice to my feelings, and the censure shall be hazarded. Mr. Pope's edition was the ground-work of this

over-bold one ; splendidly printed at Oxford in six quarto volumes, and publish'd in the year 1744 : the publisher disdains all collation of folio, or quarto ; and fetches all from his great self, and the moderns his predecessors ; wantoning in very [query, every] licence of conjecture ; and sweeping all before him, (without notice, or reason given,) that not suits his taste, or lies level to his conceptions. But this justice should be done him : as his conjectures are numerous, they are oftentimes not unhappy ; and some of them are of that excellence, that one is struck with amazement to see a person of so much judgment as he shows himself in them, adopt a method of publishing that runs counter to all the ideas that wise men have hitherto entertain'd of an editor's province and duty.

The year 1747 produc'd a fifth edition, in eight octavo volumes, publish'd by Mr. Warburton ; which though it is said in the title-page to be the joint work of himself and the second editor, the third ought rather to have been mention'd, for it is printed from his text. The merits of this performance have been so thoroughly discuss'd in two very ingenious books, *The Canons of Criticism*, and *Revisal of Shakspeare's Text*, that it is needless to say any more of it : this only shall be added to what may be there met with,—that the edition is not much benefited by fresh acquisitions from the old ones, which this gentleman seems to have neglected *.

Other charges there are, that might be brought against these modern impressions, without infringing the laws of truth or candour either : but what is said, will be sufficient ; and may satisfy their greatest favourers,—that the superstructure cannot be a sound one, which is built upon

* It will perhaps be thought strange, that nothing should be said in this place of another edition that came out about a twelve-month ago, in eight volumes, octavo ; but the reasons for it are these :—There is no use made of it, nor could be ; for the present was finish'd, within a play or two, and printed too in great part, before that appear'd : the first sheet of this work (being the first of vol. ii.) went to the press in September 1760 : and this volume was follow'd by volumes viii. iv. ix. i. vi. and vii. ; the last of which was printed off in August 1765 : In the next place, the merits and demerits of it are unknown to the present editor even at this hour : this only he has perceiv'd in it, having look'd it but slightly over, that the text it follows is that of its nearest predecessor, and from that copy it was printed.

so bad a foundation as that work of Mr. Rowe's; which all of them, as we see, in succession, have yet made their corner-stone: The truth is, it was impossible that such a beginning should end better than it has done: the fault was in the setting-out; and all the diligence that could be us'd, join'd to the discernment of a Pearce, or a Bentley, could never purge their author of all his defects by their method of proceeding.

The editor now before you was appriz'd in time of this truth; saw the wretched condition his author was reduc'd to by these late tamperings, and thought seriously of a cure for it, and that so long ago, as the year 1745; for the attempt was first suggested by that gentleman's performance, which came out at Oxford the year before: which when he had perus'd with no little astonishment, and consider'd the fatal consequences that must inevitably follow the imitation of so much licence, he resolv'd himself to be the champion; and to exert to the uttermost such abilities as he was master of, to save from further ruin an edifice of this dignity, which England must for ever glory in. Hereupon he possess'd himself of the other modern editions, the folio's, and as many quarto's as could presently be procur'd; and, within a few years after, fortune and industry help'd him to all the rest, six only excepted*; adding to them withal twelve more, which the compilers of former tables had no knowledge of. Thus furnish'd, he fell immediately to collation,—which is the first step in works of this nature; and, without it, nothing is done to purpose,—first of moderns with moderns, then of moderns with ancients, and afterwards of ancients with others more ancient: 'till, at the last, a ray of light broke forth upon him, by which he hop'd to find his way through the wilderness of these editions into that fair

* But of one of these six, (a 1. Henry IV. edition 1604) the editor thinks he is possessed of a very large fragment, imperfect only in the first and last sheet; which has been collated, as far as it goes, along with others: And of the twelve quarto editions, which he has had the good fortune to add to those that were known before, some of them are of great value; as may be seen by looking into the Table.

[As this table relates chiefly to Mr. Capell's desiderata, &c. (and had been anticipated by another table equally comprehensive, which the reader will find in the next volume,) it is here omitted. STEEVENS.]

country the poet's real habitation. He had not proceeded far in his collation, before he saw cause to come to this resolution ;—to stick invariably to the old editions, (that is, the best of them,) which hold now the place of manuscripts, no scrap of the author's writing having the luck to come down to us ; and never to depart from them, but in cases where reason, and the uniform practice of men of the greatest note in this art, tell him—they may be quitted ; nor yet in those, without notice. But it will be necessary, that the general method of this edition should now be lay'd open ; that the publick may be put in a capacity not only of comparing it with those they already have, but of judging whether any thing remains to be done towards the fixing this author's text in the manner himself gave it.

It is said a little before,—that we have nothing of his in writing ; that the printed copies are all that is left to guide us ; and that those copies are subject to numberless imperfections, but not all in like degree : our first business then, was—to examine their merit, and see on which side the scale of goodness preponderated ; which we have generally found, to be on that of the most ancient : it may be seen in the Table, what editions are judg'd to have the preference among those plays that were printed singly in quarto ; and for those plays, the text of those editions is chiefly adher'd to : in all the rest, the first folio is follow'd ; the text of which is by far the most faultless of the editions in that form ; and has also the advantage in three quarto plays, in 2 Henry IV. Othello, and Richard III. Had the editions thus follow'd been printed with carefulness, from correct copies, and copies not added to or otherwise alter'd after those impressions, there had been no occasion for going any further : but this was not at all the case, even in the best of them ; and it therefore became proper and necessary to look into the other old editions, and to select from thence whatever improves the author, or contributes to his advancement in perfectness, the point in view throughout all this performance : that they do improve him, was with the editor an argument in their favour ; and a presumption of genuineness for what is thus selected, whether additions, or differences of any other nature ; and the causes of their appearing in some copies, and being wanting in others, cannot now be discover'd, by reason of the time's dis-

tance, and defect of fit materials for making the discovery. Did the limits of this Introduction allow of it, the editor would gladly have dilated and treated more at large this article of his plan; as that which is of greatest importance, and most likely to be contested of any thing in it: but this doubt, or this dissent, (if any be,) must come from those persons only who are not yet possess'd of the idea they ought to entertain of these ancient impressions; for of those who are, he fully persuades himself he shall have both the approof and the applause. But without entering further in this place into the reasonableness, or even necessity, of so doing, he does for the present acknowledge—that he has every-where made use of such materials as he met with in other old copies, which he thought improv'd the editions that are made the groundwork of the present text: and whether they do so or no, the judicious part of the world may certainly know, by turning to a collection that will be publish'd; where all discarded readings are enter'd, all additions noted, and variations of every kind; and the editions specify'd, to which they severally belong.

But, when these helps were administer'd, there was yet behind a very great number of passages, labouring under various defects, and those of various degree, that had their cure to seek from some other sources, that of copies affording it no more: For these he had recourse in the first place to the assistance of modern copies: and, where that was incompetent, or else absolutely deficient, which was very often the case, there he sought the remedy in himself, using judgment and conjecture; which, he is bold to say, he will not be found to have exercis'd wantonly, but to follow the establish'd rules of critique with soberness and temperance. These emendations, (whether of his own, or other gentlemen *,) carrying in themselves a face of

* In the manuscripts from which all these plays are printed, the emendations are given to their proper owners by initials and other marks that are in the margin of those manuscripts; but they are suppressed in the print for two reasons: First, their number, in some pages, makes them a little unsightly: and the editor professes himself weak enough to like a well-printed book: In the next place, he does declare—that his only object has been, to do service to his great author; which provided it be done, he thinks it of small importance by what hand the service was administer'd: If the partizans of former editors shall chance

certainly, and coming in aid of places that were apparently corrupt, are admitted into the text, and the rejected reading is always put below; some others,—that are neither of that certainty, nor are of that necessity, but are specious and plausible, and may be thought by some to mend the passage they belong to,—will have a place in the collection that is spoken of above. But where it is said, that the rejected reading is always put below, this must be taken with some restriction: for some of the emendations, and of course the ancient readings upon which they are grounded, being of a complicated nature, the general method was there inconvenient; and, for these few, you are refer'd to a note which will be found among the rest: and another sort there are, that are simply insertions; these are effectually pointed out by being printed in the gothick or black character.

Hitherto, the defects and errors of these old editions have been of such a nature, that we could lay them before the reader, and submit to his judgment the remedies that are apply'd to them; which is accordingly done, either in the page itself where they occur, or in some note that is to follow: but there are some behind that would not be so manag'd; either by reason of their frequency, or difficulty of subjecting them to the rules under which the others are brought: they have been spoken of before at p. 122, where the corruptions are all enumerated, and are as follows;—a want of proper exits and entrances, and of many scenical directions, throughout the work in general, and, in some of the plays, a want of division; and the errors are those of measure, and punctuation: all these are mended, and supply'd, without notice and silently; but the reasons for so doing, and the method observ'd in doing it, shall be a little enlarg'd upon, that the fidelity of the editor, and that which is chiefly to distinguish him from those who have gone before, may stand sacred and unimpeachable; and, first, of the division.

The thing chiefly intended in reprinting the list of titles that may be seen at p. 124, was,—to show which plays

to think them injur'd by this suppression, he must upon this occasion violate the rules of modesty, by declaring—that he himself is the most injur'd by it; whose emendations are equal, at least in number, to all theirs if put together; to say nothing of his recover'd readings, which are more considerable still.

were divided into acts, which into acts and scenes, and which of them were not divided at all ; and the number of the first class is—eight ; of the third—eleven : for though in Henry V. 1 Henry VI. Love's Labour's Lost, and The Taming of the Shrew, there is some division aim'd at ; yet it is so lame and erroneous, that it was thought best to consider them as totally undivided, and to rank them accordingly : now when these plays were to be divided, as well those of the first class as those of the third, the plays of the second class were studiously attended to ; and a rule was pick'd out from them, by which to regulate this division : which rule might easily have been discover'd before, had but any the least pains have been bestow'd upon it ; and certainly it was very well worth it, since neither can the representation be manag'd, nor the order and thread of the fable be properly conceiv'd by the reader, 'till this article is adjusted. The plays that are come down to us divided, must be look'd upon as of the author's own settling ; and in them, with regard to acts, we find him following establish'd precepts, or, rather, conforming himself to the practice of some other dramatick writers of his time ; for they, it is likely, and nature, were the books he was best acquainted with : his scene divisions he certainly did not fetch from writers upon the drama ; for, in them, he observes a method in which perhaps he is singular, and he is invariable in the use of it : with him, a change of scene implies generally a change of place, though not always ; but always an entire evacuation of it, and a succession of new persons : that *liaison* of the scenes, which Jonson seems to have attempted, and upon which the French stage prides itself, he does not appear to have had any idea of ; of the other unities he was perfectly well appriz'd ; and has follow'd them, in one of his plays, with as great strictness and greater happiness than can perhaps be met with in any other writer : the play meant is The Comedy of Errors ; in which the action is one, the place one, and the time such as even Aristotle himself would allow of—the revolution of half a day : but even in this play, the change of scene arises from change of persons, and by that it is regulated ; as are also all the other plays that are not divided in the folio ; for whoever will take the trouble to examine those that are divided, (and they are pointed out for him in the list,) will see them conform exactly to the

rule above-mention'd ; and can then have but little doubt, that it should be apply'd to all the rest *. To have distinguish'd these divisions,—made (indeed) without the authority, but following the example of the folio,—had been useless and troublesome ; and the editor fully persuades himself, that what he has said will be sufficient, and that he shall be excus'd by the ingenious and candid for overpassing them without further notice : whose pardon he hopes also to have for some other unnotic'd matters that are related to this in hand, such as—marking the place of action, both general and particular ; supplying scenical directions ; and due regulating of exits, and entrances : for the first, there is no tittle in the old editions ; and in both the latter, they are so deficient and faulty throughout, that it would not be much amiss if we look'd upon them as wanting too ; and then all these several articles might be consider'd as additions, that needed no other pointing out than a declaration that they are so : the light they throw upon the plays in general, and particularly upon some parts of them,—such as, the battle scenes throughout ; Cæsar's passage to the senate house, and subsequent assassination ; Antony's death ; the surprizal and death of Cleopatra ; that of Titus Andronicus ; and a multitude of others, which are all directed new in this edition,—will justify these insertions ; and may, possibly, merit the reader's thanks, for the great aids which they afford to his conception.

It remains now to speak of errors of the old copies which are here amended without notice, to wit—the pointing, and wrong division of much of them respecting the numbers. And as to the first, it is so extremely erroneous, throughout all the plays, and in every old copy, that small regard is due to it ; and it becomes an editor's duty, (instead of being influenc'd by such a punctuation, or even casting his eyes upon it,) to attend closely to the meaning of what is before him, and to new-point it ac-

* The divisions that are in the folio are religiously adher'd to, except in two or three instances which will be spoken of in their place ; so that, as is said before, a perusal of those old-divided plays will put every one in a capacity of judging whether the present editor has proceeded rightly or no : the current editions are divided in such a manner, that nothing like a rule can be collected from any of them.

cordingly: was it the business of this edition—to make parade of discoveries, this article alone would have afforded ample field for it; for a very great number of passages are now first set to rights by this only, which, before, had either no sense at all, or one unsuiting the context, and unworthy the noble penner of it; but all the emendations of this sort, though inferior in merit to no others whatsoever, are consign'd to silence; some few only excepted, of passages that have been much contested, and whose present adjustment might possibly be call'd in question again; these will be spoken of in some note, and a reason given for embracing them: all the other parts of the works have been examin'd with equal diligence, and equal attention; and the editor flatters himself, that the punctuation he has follow'd, (into which he has admitted some novelties *,) will be found of so much benefit to his author, that those who run may read, and that with profit and understanding. The other great mistake in these old editions, and which is very insufficiently rectify'd in any of the new ones, relates to the poet's numbers; his verse being often wrong divided, or printed wholly as prose, and his prose as often printed like verse: this, though not so universal as their wrong pointing, is yet so extensive an error in the old copies, and so impossible to be pointed out otherwise than by a note, that an editor's silent amendment of it is surely pardonable at least; for who would not be disgusted with that perpetual sameness which must necessarily have been in all the notes of this sort? Neither are they, in truth, emendations that require proving; every good ear does immediately adopt them, and every lover of the poet will be pleas'd with that accession of beauty which results to him from them: it is perhaps to be lamented, that there is yet standing in his works much displeasing mixture of prosaick and metrical dialogue, and sometimes in places seemingly improper, as—in *Othello*, vol. ix. p. 270; and some others which men of judgment will be able to pick out for themselves:

* If the use of these new pointings, and also of certain marks that he will meet with in this edition, do not occur immediately to the reader, (as we think it will) he may find it explain'd to him at large in the preface to a little octavo volume intitl'd—"Prolusions, or, Select Pieces of Ancient Poetry;" publish'd in 1760 by this editor, and printed for Mr. Tonson.

but these blemishes are not now to be wip'd away, at least not by an editor, whose province it far exceeds to make a change of this nature; but must remain as marks of the poet's negligence, and of the haste with which his pieces were compos'd: what he manifestly intended prose, (and we can judge of his intentions only from what appears in the editions that are come down to us,) should be printed as prose, what verse as verse; which, it is hop'd, is now done, with an accuracy that leaves no great room for any further considerable improvements in that way.

Thus have we run through, in as brief a manner as possible, all the several heads of which it was thought proper and even necessary that the publick should be appriz'd; as well those that concern preceding editions, both old and new; as the other which we have just quitted,—the method observ'd in the edition that is now before them: which though not so entertaining, it is confess'd, nor affording so much room to display the parts and talents of a writer, as some other topics that have generally supply'd the place of them; such as—criticisms or panegyricks upon the author, historical anecdotes, essays, and *florilegia*; yet there will be found some odd people, who may be apt to pronounce of them—that they are suitable to the place they stand in, and convey all the instruction that should be look'd for in a preface. Here, therefore, we might take our leave of the reader, bidding him welcome to the banquet that is set before him; were it not apprehended, and reasonably, that he will expect some account why it is not serv'd up to him at present with it's accustomed and laudable garniture, of “Notes, Glossaries,” &c. Now though it might be reply'd, as a reason for what is done,—that a very great part of the world, amongst whom is the editor himself, profess much dislike to this paginary intermixture of text and comment; in works merely of entertainment, and written in the language of the country; as also—that he, the editor, does not possess the secret of dealing out notes by measure, and distributing them amongst his volumes so nicely that the equality of their bulk shall not be broke in upon the thickness of a sheet of paper; yet, having other matter at hand which he thinks may excuse him better, he will not have recourse to these abovemention'd: which matter is no other, than his very strong desire of approving himself to the publick a man of integrity; and of making his future present more

perfect, and as worthy of their acceptance as his abilities will let him. For the explaining of what is said, which is a little wrap'd up in mystery at present, we must inform that publick—that another work is prepar'd, and in great forwardness, having been wrought upon many years; nearly indeed as long as the work which is now before them, for they have gone hand in hand almost from the first: this work, to which we have given for title *The School of Shakspeare*, consists wholly of extracts, (with observations upon some of them, interspers'd occasionally,) from books that may properly be call'd—his school; as they are indeed the sources from which he drew the greater part of his knowledge in mythology and classical matters*, his fable, his history, and even the seeming pecu-

* Though our expressions, as we think, are sufficiently guarded in this place, yet, being fearful of misconstruction, we desire to be heard further as to this affair of his learning. It is our firm belief then,—that Shakspeare was very well grounded, at least in *Latin*, at school: It appears from the clearest evidence possible, that his father was a man of no little substance, and very well able to give him such education; which, perhaps, he might be inclin'd to carry further, by sending him to a university; but was prevented in this design (if he had it) by his son's early marriage, which, from monuments, and other like evidence, it appears with no less certainty, must have happen'd before he was seventeen, or very soon after: the displeasure of his father, which was the consequence of this marriage, or else some excesses which he is said to have been guilty of, it is probable, drove him up to town; where he engag'd early in some of the theatres, and was honour'd with the patronage of the Earl of Southampton: his *Venus and Adonis* is address'd to the Earl in a very pretty and modest dedication, in which he calls it—"the first heire of his invention;" and ushers it to the world with this singular motto,—

Vilia miretur vulgus, mihi flavus Apollo

Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua;

and the whole poem, as well as his *Lucrece*, which follow'd it soon after, together with his choice of those subjects, are plain marks of his acquaintance with some of the Latin classicks, at least at that time: The dissipation of youth, and, when that was over, the busy scene in which he instantly plung'd himself, may very well be suppos'd to have hinder'd his making any great progress in them; but that such a mind as his should quite lose the tincture of any knowledge it had once been imbu'd with, can not be imagin'd: accordingly we see, that this school-learning

liarities of his language: to furnish out these materials, all the plays have been perus'd, within a very small

(for it was no more) stuck with him to the last; and it was the recordations, as we may call it, of that learning which produc'd the Latin that is in many of his plays, and most plentifully in those that are most early: every several piece of it is aptly introduc'd, given to a proper character, and utter'd upon some proper occasion; and so well cemented, as it were, and join'd to the passage it stands in, as to deal conviction to the judicious—that the whole was wrought up together, and fetch'd from his own little store, upon the sudden and without study.

The other languages, which he has sometimes made use of, that is—the Italian and French, are not of such difficult conquest that we should think them beyond his reach: an acquaintance with the first of them was a sort of fashion in his time; Surrey and the sonnet-writers set it on foot, and it was continu'd by Sidney and Spenser: all our poetry issu'd from that school; and it would be wonderful, indeed, if he, whom we saw a little before putting himself with so much zeal under the banner of the muses, should not have been tempted to taste at least of that fountain to which of all his other brethren there was such continual resort: let us conclude then, that he did taste of it; but, happily for himself, and more happy for the world that enjoys him now, he did not find it to his relish, and threw away the cup: metaphor apart, it is evident—that he had some little knowledge of the Italian: perhaps, just as much as enabl'd him to read a novel or a poem; and to put some few fragments of it, with which his memory furnish'd him, into the mouth of a pedant, or fine gentleman.

How or when he acquir'd it we must be content to be ignorant, but of the French language he was somewhat a greater master than of the two that have gone before; yet, unless we except their novelists, he does not appear to have had much acquaintance with any of their writers; what he has given us of it is merely colloquial, flows with great ease from him, and is reasonably pure: Should it be said—he had travel'd for't, we know not who can confute us: in his days indeed, and with people of his station, the custom of doing so was rather rarer than in ours; yet we have met with an example, and in his own band of players, in the person of the very famous Mr. Kempe; of whose travels there is mention in a silly old play, call'd—*The Return from Parnassus*, printed in 1606, but written much earlier in the time of Queen Elizabeth: add to this—the exceeding great liveliness and justness that is seen in many descriptions of the sea and of promontories, which, if examin'd, shew another sort of knowledge of them than is to be gotten in books or re-

number, that were in print in his time or some short time after; the chroniclers his contemporaries, or that a little preceded him; many original poets of that age, and many translators; with essayists, novelists, and story-mongers in great abundance: every book, in short, has been consulted that it was possible to procure, with which it could be thought he was acquainted, or that seem'd likely to contribute any thing towards his illustration. To what degree they illustrate him, and in how new a light they set the character of this great poet himself can never be conceiv'd as it should be, 'till these extracts come forth to the publick view, in their just magnitude, and properly digested: for besides the various passages that he has either made use of or alluded to, many other matters have been selected and will be found in this work, tending all

lations; and if these be lay'd together, this conjecture of his travelling may not be thought void of probability.

One opinion, we are sure, which is advanc'd somewhere or other, is utterly so;—that this Latin, and this Italian, and the language that was last mention'd, are insertions and the work of some other hand: there has been started now and then in philological matters a proposition so strange as to carry its own condemnation in it, and this is of the number; it has been honour'd already with more notice than it is any ways intil'd to, where the poet's Latin is spoke of a little while before; to which answer it must be left, and we shall pass on—to profess our entire belief of the genuineness of every several part of this work, and that he only was the author of it: he might write beneath himself at particular times and certainly does in some places; but he is not always without excuse; and it frequently happens that a weak scene serves to very good purpose, as will be made appear at one time or other. It may be thought that there is one argument still unanswer'd, which has been brought against his acquaintance with the Latin and other languages; and that is, —that, had he been so acquainted, it could not have happen'd but that some imitations would have crept into his writings, of which certainly there are none: but this argument has been answer'd in effect; when it was said—that his knowledge in these languages was but slender, and his conversation with the writers in them slender too of course: but had it been otherwise, and he as deeply read in them as some people have thought him, his works (it is probable) had been as little deform'd with imitations as we now see them: Shakspeare was far above such a practice; he had the stores in himself, and wanted not the assistance of a foreign hand to dress him up in things of their lending.

to the same end,—our better knowledge of him and his writings; and one class of them there is, for which we shall perhaps be censur'd as being too profuse in them, namely—the almost innumerable examples, drawn from these ancient writers, of words and modes of expression which many have thought peculiar to Shakspeare, and have been too apt to impute to him as a blemish: but the quotations of this class do effectually purge him from such a charge, which is one reason of their profusion; though another main inducement to it has been, a desire of shewing the true force and meaning of the aforesaid unusual words and expressions; which can no way be better ascertain'd, than by a proper variety of well-chosen examples. Now,—to bring this matter home to the subject for which it has been alledg'd, and upon whose account this affair is now laid before the publick somewhat before it's time,—who is so short-sighted as not to perceive, upon first reflection, that, without manifest injustice, the notes upon this author could not precede the publication of the work we have been describing; whose choicest materials would unavoidably and certainly have found a place in those notes, and so been twice retail'd upon the world; a practice which the editor has often condemn'd in others, and could therefore not resolve to be guilty of in himself? By postponing these notes a while, things will be as they ought: they will then be confin'd to that which is their proper subject, explanation alone, intermix'd with some little criticism; and instead of long quotations, which would otherwise have appear'd in them, the School of Shakspeare will be referr'd to occasionally; and one of the many indexes with which this same School will be provided, will afford an ampler and truer Glossary than can be made out of any other matter. In the mean while, and till such time as the whole can be got ready, and their way clear'd for them by publication of the book above-mention'd, the reader will please to take in good part some few of these notes with which he will be presented by and by: they were written at least four years ago, with intention of placing them at the head of the several notes that are design'd for each play; but are now detach'd from their fellows, and made parcel of the Introduction, in compliance with some friends' opinion; who having given them a perusal, will needs have it, that 'tis expedient the world should be made acquainted forthwith

—in what sort of reading the poor poet himself, and his editor after him, have been unfortunately immers'd.

This discourse is run out, we know not how, into greater heap of leaves than was any ways thought of, and has perhaps fatigu'd the reader equally with the penner of it: yet can we not dismiss him, nor lay down our pen, 'till one article more has been enquir'd into, which seems no less proper for the discussion of this place, than one which we have inserted before, beginning at p. 126; as we there ventur'd to stand up in the behalf of some of the quarto's and maintain their authenticity, so mean we to have the hardiness here to defend some certain plays in this collection from the attacks of a number of writers who have thought fit to call in question their genuineness: the plays contested are—The Three Parts of Henry VI.; Love's Labour's Lost; The Taming of the Shrew; and Titus Andronicus; and the sum of what is brought against them, so far at least as is hitherto come to knowledge, may be all ultimately resolv'd into the sole opinion of their unworthiness, exclusive of some weak surmises which do not deserve a notice: it is therefore fair and allowable, by all laws of duelling, to oppose opinion to opinion; which if we can strengthen with reasons, and something like proofs, which are totally wanting on the other side, the last opinion may chance to carry the day.

To begin then with the first of them, the Henry VI. in three parts. We are quite in the dark as to when the first part was written; but should be apt to conjecture, that it was some considerable time after the other two; and, perhaps, when those two were re-touch'd, and made a little fitter than they are in their first draught to rank with the author's other plays which he has fetch'd from our English history: and those two parts, even with all their re-touchings, being still much inferior to the other plays of that class, he may reasonably be suppos'd to have underwrit himself on purpose in the first, that it might the better match with those it belong'd to: now that these two plays (the first draughts of them, at least,) are among his early performances, we know certainly from their date; which is further confirm'd by the two concluding lines of his Henry V. spoken by the Chorus; and (possibly) it were not going too far, to imagine—that they are his second attempt in history, and near in time to his ori-

ginal King John, which is also in two parts: and, if this be so, we may safely pronounce them his, and even highly worthy of him; it being certain, that there was no English play upon the stage, at that time, which can come at all in competition with them; and this probably it was, which procur'd them the good reception that is mention'd too in the Chorus. The plays we are now speaking of have been inconceivably mangl'd either in the copy or the press, or perhaps both: yet this may be discover'd in them,—that the alterations made afterwards by the author are nothing near so considerable as those in some other plays; the incidents, the characters, every principal outline in short being the same in both draughts; so that what we shall have occasion to say of the second, may, in some degree, and without much violence, be apply'd also to the first: and this we presume to say of it;—that, low as it must be set in comparison with his other plays, it has beauties in it, and grandeurs, of which no other author was capable but Shakspeare only: that extreamly-affecting scene of the death of young Rutland, that of his father which comes next it, and of Clifford the murtherer of them both; Beaufort's dreadful exit, the exit of King Henry, and a scene of wondrous simplicity and wondrous tenderness united, in which that Henry is made a speaker, while his last decisive battle is fighting,—are as so many stamps upon these plays; by which his property is mark'd, and himself declar'd the owner of them, beyond controversy as we think: and though we have selected these passages only, and recommended them to observation, it had been easy to name abundance of others which bear his mark as strongly: and one circumstance there is that runs through all the three plays, by which he is as surely to be known as by any other that can be thought of; and that is,—the preservation of character: all the personages in them are distinctly and truly delineated, and the character given them sustain'd uniformly throughout; the enormous Richard's particularly, which in the third of these plays is seen rising towards it's zenith: and who sees not the future monster, and acknowledges at the same time the pen that drew it, in these two lines only spoken over a king who lies stab'd before him,—

“What, will the aspiring blood of Lancaster

“Sink in the ground? I thought, it would have mounted.”

let him never pretend discernment hereafter in any case of this nature.

It is hard to persuade one's self, that the objectors to the play which comes next are indeed serious in their opinion; for if he is not visible in *Love's Labour's Lost*, we know not in which of his comedies he can be said to be so: the ease and sprightliness of the dialogue in very many parts of it; it's quick turns of wit, and the humour it abounds in; and (chiefly) in those truly comick characters, the pedant and his companion, the page, the constable, Costard, and Armado,—seem more than sufficient to prove Shakspeare the author of it: and for the blemishes of this play, we must seek the true cause in it's antiquity; which we may venture to carry higher than 1598, the date of it's first impression: rime, when this play appear'd, was thought a beauty of the drama, and heard with singular pleasure by an audience who but a few years before, had been accusom'd to all rime; and the measure we call dogrel, and are so much offended with, had no such effect upon the ears of that time: but whether blemishes or no, however this matter be which we have brought to exculpate him, neither of these articles can with any face of justice be alledg'd against *Love's Labour's Lost*, seeing they are both to be met with in several other plays, the genuineness of which has not been question'd by any one. And one thing more shall be observ'd in the behalf of this play;—that the author himself was so little displeas'd at least with some parts of it, that he has brought them a second time upon the stage; for who may not perceive that his famous Benedick and Beatrice are but little more than the counter-parts of Biron and Rosaline? All which circumstances consider'd, and that especially of the writer's childhood (as it may be term'd) when this comedy was produc'd, we may confidently pronounce it his true offspring, and replace it amongst it's brethren.

That the *Taming of the Shrew* should ever have been put into this class of plays, and adjudg'd a spurious one, may justly be reckon'd wonderful, when we consider it's merit, and the reception it has generally met with in the world: it's success at first, and the esteem it was then held in, induc'd Fletcher to enter the lists with it in another play, in which Petruchio is humbl'd and Catharine triumphant; and we have it in his works, under the title of “*The Woman's Prize, or, the Tamer tam'd:*” but,

by an unhappy mistake of buffoonery for humour and obscenity for wit, which was not uncommon with that author, his production came lamely off, and was soon consign'd to the oblivion in which it is now bury'd; whereas this of his antagonist flourishes still, and has maintain'd its place upon the stage (in some shape or other) from its very first appearance down to the present hour: and this success it has merited, by true wit and true humour; a fable of very artful construction, much business, and highly interesting; and by natural and well-sustain'd characters, which no pen but Shakspeare's was capable of drawing: what defects it has, are chiefly in the diction; the same (indeed) with those of the play that was last-mention'd, and to be accounted for the same way: for we are strongly inclin'd to believe it a neighbour in time to *Love's Labour's Lost*, though we want the proofs of it which we have luckily for that*.

But the plays which we have already spoke of are but slightly attack'd, and by few writers, in comparison of this which we are now come to of "*Titus Andronicus*;" commentators, editors, every one (in short) who has had to do with Shakspeare, unite all in condemning it,—as a very bundle of horrors, totally unfit for the stage, and unlike the poet's manner, and even the style of his other pieces; all which allegations are extremely true, and we readily admit of them, but can not admit the conclusion—that, therefore, it is not his; and shall now proceed to give the reasons of our dissent, but (first) the play's age must be enquir'd into. In the Induction to Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, which was written in the year 1614, the audience is thus accosted:—"Hee that will sweare, *Jeronimo*, or *Andronicus* are the best playes, yet, shall passe unexcepted at, heere, as a man whose judgement shewes

* The authenticity of this play stands further confirm'd by the testimony of Sir Aston Cockayn; a writer who came near to Shakspeare's time, and does expressly ascribe it to him in an epigram address'd to Mr. Clement Fisher of Wincot; but it is (perhaps) superfluous, and of but little weight neither, as it will be said—that Sir Aston proceeds only upon the evidence of it's being in print in his name: we do therefore lay no great stress upon it, nor shall insert the epigram; it will be found in *The School of Shakspeare*, which is the proper place for things of that sort.

it is constant, and hath stood still, these five and twentie, or thirty yeeres. Though it be an *ignorance*, it is a virtuous and stay'd ignorance; and next to *truth*, a confirm'd error does well; such a one the *author* knowes where to finde him." We have here the great Ben himself, joining this play with Jeronimo, or, the Spanish Tragedy, and bearing express testimony to the credit they were both in with the publick at the time they were written; but this is by the by; to ascertain that time, was the chief reason for inserting the quotation, and there we see it fix'd to twenty-five or thirty years prior to this Induction: now it is not necessary, to suppose that Jonson speaks in this place with exact precision; but allowing that he does, the first of these periods carries us back to 1589, a date not very repugnant to what is afterwards advanc'd: Langbaine, in his Account of the English Dramatick Poets, under the article—SHAKSPEARE, does expressly tell us,—that "Andronicus was first printed in 1594, quarto, and acted by the Earls of Derby, Pembroke, and Essex, their servants;" and though the edition is not now to be met with, and he who mentions it be no exact writer, nor greatly to be rely'd on in many of his articles, yet in this which we have quoted he is so very particular that one can hardly withhold assent to it; especially, as this account of it's printing coincides well enough with Jonson's æra of writing this play; to which therefore we subscribe, and go on upon that ground. The books of that time afford strange examples of the barbarism of the publick taste both upon the stage and elsewhere: a conceited one of John Lilly's set the whole nation a madding; and, for a while, every pretender to politeness "parl'd Euphuism," as it was phras'd, and no writings would go down with them but such as were pen'd in that fantastical manner: the setter-up of this fashion try'd it also in comedy; but seems to have miscarry'd in that, and for this plain reason: the people who govern theatres are, the middle and lower orders of the world; and these expected laughter in comedies, which this stuff of Lilly's was incapable of exciting: but some other writers, who rose exactly at that time, succeeded better in certain tragical performances, though as outrageous to the full in their way, and as remote from nature, as these comick ones of Lilly; for falling in with that innate love of blood which has been often objected to British audiences, and choosing fables of horror which

they made horrider still by their manner of handling them, they produc'd a set of monsters that are not to be parallel'd in all the annals of play-writing; yet they were receiv'd with applause, and were the favourites of the publick for almost ten years together ending at 1595: many plays of this stamp, it is probable, have perish'd; but those that are come down to us, are as follows;—"The Wars of Cyrus; Tamburlaine the Great, in two parts; The Spanish Tragedy, likewise in two parts; Soliman and Perseda; and Selimus, a tragedy *;" which whoever has means of coming at, and can have patience to examine, will see evident tokens of a fashion then prevailing, which occasion'd all these plays to be cast in the same mold. Now, Shakspeare, whatever motives he might have in some other parts of it, at this period of his life wrote certainly for profit; and seeing it was to be had in this way, (and this way only, perhaps,) he fell in with the current, and gave his sorry auditors a piece to their tooth in this contested play of Titus Andronicus; which as it came out at the same time with the plays above-mention'd, is most

* No evidence has occur'd to prove exactly the time these plays were written, except that passage of Jonson's which relates to Jeronimo; but the editions we have read them in, are as follows: Tamburlaine in 1593; Selimus, and The Wars of Cyrus, in 1594; and Soliman and Perseda, in 1599; the other without a date, but as early as the earliest: they are also without a name of author; nor has any book been met with to instruct us in that particular, except only for Jeronimo; which we are told by Heywood, in his Apology for Actors, was written by Thomas Kyd; author, or translator rather, (for it is taken from the French of Robert Garnier,) of another play, intitl'd—Cornelia, printed likewise in 1594. Which of these extravagant plays had the honour to lead the way, we can't tell, but Jeronimo seems to have the best pretensions to it; as Selimus has above all his other brethren, to bearing away the palm for blood and murder: this curious piece has these lines for a conclusion:—

"If this first part Gentles, do like you well,

"The second part, shall greater murthers tell."

But whether the audience had enough of it, or how it has happen'd we can't tell, but no such second part is to be found. All these plays were the constant butt of the poets who came immediately after them, and of Shakspeare amongst the rest; and by their ridicule the town at last was made sensible of their ill judgment, and the theatre was purg'd of these monsters.

exactly like them in almost every particular; their very numbers, consisting all of ten syllables with hardly any redundant, are copy'd by this Proteus, who could put on any shape that either serv'd his interest or suited his inclination: and this, we hope, is a fair and unforc'd way of accounting for "Andronicus;" and may convince the most prejudic'd—that Shakspeare might be the writer of it; as he might also of *Lochrine* which is ascrib'd to him, a ninth tragedy, in form and time agreeing perfectly with the others. But to conclude this article,—However he may be censur'd as rash or ill-judging, the editor ventures to declare—that he himself wanted not the conviction of the foregoing argument to be satisfy'd who the play belongs to; for though a work of imitation, and conforming itself to models truly execrable throughout, yet the genius of its author breaks forth in some places, and, to the editor's eye, Shakspeare stands confess'd: the third act in particular may be read with admiration even by the most delicate; who, if they are not without feelings, may chance to find themselves touch'd by it with such passions as tragedy should excite, that is—terror, and pity. The reader will please to observe—that all these contested plays are in the folio, which is dedicated to the poet's patrons and friends, the earls of Pembroke and Montgomery, by editors who are seemingly honest men, and profess themselves dependant upon those noblemen; to whom therefore they would hardly have had the confidence to present forgeries, and pieces supposititious; in which too they were liable to be detected by those identical noble persons themselves, as well as by a very great part of their other readers and auditors: which argument, though of no little strength in itself, we omitted to bring before, as having better (as we thought) and more forcible to offer; but it had behov'd those gentlemen who have question'd the plays to have got rid of it in the first instance, as it lies full in their way in the very entrance upon this dispute.

We shall close this part of the Introduction with some observations, that were reserv'd for this place, upon that paragraph of the player editors' preface which is quoted at p. 123; and then taking this further liberty with the reader,—to call back his attention to some particulars that concern the present edition, dismiss him to be entertain'd (as we hope) by a sort of appendix, consisting of those notes that have been mention'd, in which the true

and undoubted originals of almost all the poet's fables are clearly pointed out. But first of the preface. Besides the authenticity of all the several pieces that make up this collection, and their care in publishing them, both solemnly affirm'd in the paragraph refer'd to, we there find these honest editors acknowledging in terms equally solemn the author's right in his copies, and lamenting that he had not exercis'd that right by a publication of them during his life-time; and from the manner in which they express themselves, we are strongly inclin'd to think—that he had really form'd such a design, but towards his last days, and too late to put it in execution: a collection of Jonson's was at that instant in the press, and upon the point of coming forth; which might probably inspire such a thought into him and his companions, and produce conferences between them—about a similar publication from him, and the pieces that should compose it, which the poet might make a list of. It is true, this is only a supposition; but a supposition arising naturally, as we think, from the incident that has been mention'd, and the expressions of his fellow players and editors: and, if suffer'd to pass for truth, here is a good and sound reason for the exclusion of all those other plays that have been attributed to him upon some grounds or other;—he himself has proscrib'd them; and we cannot forbear hoping, that they will in no future time rise up against him, and be thrust into his works: a disavowal of weak and idle pieces, the productions of green years, wantonness, or inattention, is a right that all authors are vested with; and should be exerted by all, if their reputation is dear to them; had Jonson us'd it, his character had stood higher than it does. But, after all, they who have pay'd attention to this truth are not always secure; the indiscreet zeal of an admirer, or avarice of a publisher, has frequently added things that dishonour them; and where realities have been wanting, forgeries supply the place; thus has Homer his Hymns, and the poor Mantuan his Ciris and his Culex. Noble and great authors demand all our veneration: where their wills can be discover'd, they ought sacredly to be comply'd with; and that editor ill discharges his duty, who presumes to load them with things they have renounc'd: it happens but too often, that we have other ways to shew our regard to them; their own great want of care in their copies, and the still greater

want of it that is commonly in their impressions, will find sufficient exercise for any one's friendship, who may wish to see their works set forth in that perfection which was intended by the author. And this friendship we have endeavour'd to shew to Shakspeare in the present edition: the plan of it has been lay'd before the reader; upon whom it rests to judge finally of its goodness, as well as how it is executed: but as several matters have interven'd that may have driven it from his memory; and we are desirous above all things to leave a strong impression upon him of one merit which it may certainly pretend to, that is—it's fidelity; we shall take leave to remind him, at parting, that—Throughout all this work, what is added without the authority of some ancient edition, is printed in a black letter: what alter'd, and what thrown out, constantly taken notice of; some few times in a note, where the matter was long, or of a complex nature*; but, more generally, at the bottom of the page; where what is put out of the text, how minute and insignificant soever, is always to be met with: what alter'd, as constantly set down, and in the proper words of that edition upon which the alteration is form'd: and, even in authoriz'd readings, whoever is desirous of knowing further, what edition is follow'd preferably to the others, may be gratify'd too in that, by consulting the Various Readings; which are now finish'd; and will be publish'd, together with the Notes, in some other volumes, with all the speed that is convenient.

* The particulars that could not well be pointed out below, according to the general method, or otherwise than by a note, are of three sorts;—omissions, any thing large; transpositions; and such differences of punctuation as produce great changes in the sense of a passage: instances of the first occur in *Love's Labour's Lost*, p. 54, and in *Troilus and Cressida*, p. 109 and 117; of the second, in *The Comedy of Errors*, p. 62, and in *Richard III.* p. 92, and 102; and *The Tempest*, p. 69, and *King Lear*, p. 53, afford instances of the last; as may be seen by looking into any modern edition, where all those passages stand nearly as in the old ones.

[All these references are to Mr. Capell's own edition of our author.]

ORIGIN OF SHAKSPEARE'S FABLES.

All's Well that Ends Well.

The fable of this play is taken from a novel, of which Boccace is the original author; in whose Decameron it may be seen at p. 97.^b of the Giunti edition, reprinted at London. But it is more than probable, that Shakspeare read it in a book, call'd The Palace of Pleasure: which is a collection of novels translated from other authors, made by one William Painter, and by him first publish'd in the years 1565 and 67, in two tomes, quarto; the novel now spoken of, is the thirty-eighth of tome the first. This novel is a meagre translation, not (perhaps) immediately from Boccace, but from a French translator of him: as the original is in every body's hands, it may there be seen—that nothing is taken from it by Shakspeare, but some leading incidents of the serious part of his play.

Antony and Cleopatra.

This play, together with Coriolanus, Julius Cæsar, and some part of Timon of Athens, are form'd upon Plutarch's Lives, in the articles—Coriolanus, Brutus, Julius Cæsar, and Antony: of which lives there is a French translation, of great fame, made by Amiot, Bishop of Auxerre and great almoner of France; which, some few years after it's first appearance, was put into an English dress by our countryman Sir Thomas North, and publish'd in the year 1579, in folio. As the language of this translation is pretty good, for the time; and the sentiments, which are Plutarch's, breathe the genuine spirit of the several historical personages; Shakspeare has, with much judgment, introduc'd no small number of speeches into these plays, in the very words of that translator, turning them into verse: which he has so well wrought up, and incorporated with his plays, that, what he has introduc'd, cannot be discover'd by any reader, 'till it is pointed out for him.

As You Like It.

A novel, or (rather) pastoral romance, intitl'd—Euphues's Golden Legacy, written in a very fantastical style by Dr. Thomas Lodge, and by him first publish'd in the year

1590, in quarto, is the foundation of *As You Like It*; besides the fable, which is pretty exactly follow'd, the outlines of certain principal characters may be observ'd in the novel: and some expressions of the novelist (few, indeed, and of no great moment,) seem to have taken possession of Shakspeare's memory, and from thence crept into his play.

Comedy of Errors.

Of this play, the *Menæchmi* of Plautus is most certainly the original: yet the poet went not to the Latin for it; but took up with an English *Menæchmi*, put out by one W. W. in 1595, quarto. This translation,—in which the writer professes to have us'd some liberties, which he has distinguished by a particular mark,—is in prose, and a very good one for the time: it furnish'd Shakspeare with nothing but his principal incident; as you may in part see by the translator's argument, which is in verse, and runs thus:

“ Two twinborne sonnes, a Sicill marchant had,
 “ Menechmus one, and Sosicles the other;
 “ The first his father lost a little lad,
 “ The grandsire namde the latter like his brother:
 “ This (growne a man) long travell tooke to seeke,
 “ His brother, and to Epidamnum came,
 “ Where th' other dwelt inricht, and him so like,
 “ That citzens there take him for the same;
 “ Father, wife, neighbours, each mistaking either,
 “ Much pleasant error, ere they meete together.”

It is probable, that the last of these verses suggested the title of Shakspeare's play.

Cymbeline.

Boccace's story of Bernardo da Ambrogivolo, (Day 2, Nov. 9,) is generally suppos'd to have furnish'd Shakspeare with the fable of *Cymbeline*: but the embracers of this opinion seem not to have been aware, that many of that author's novels (translated, or imitated,) are to be found in English books, prior to, or contemporary with, Shakspeare: and of this novel in particular, there is an imitation extant in a story-book of that time, intitl'd—*Westward for Smelts*: it is the second tale in the book: the scene, and the actors of it are different from Boccace,

as Shakspeare's are from both ; but the main of the story is the same in all. We may venture to pronounce it a book of those times, and that early enough to have been us'd by Shakspeare, as I am persuaded it was ; though the copy that I have of it, is no older than 1620 ; it is a quarto pamphlet of only five sheets and a half, printed in a black letter : some reasons for my opinion are given in another place ; (v. Winter's Tale) though perhaps they are not necessary, as it may one day better be made appear a true one, by the discovery of some more ancient edition.

Hamlet.

About the middle of the sixteenth century, Francis de Belleforest, a French gentleman, entertained his countrymen with a collection of novels, which he intitles—*Histoires Tragiques* ; they are in part originals, part translations, and chiefly from Bandello : he began to publish them in the year 1564 ; and continu'd his publication successively in several tomes, how many I know not ; the dedication to his fifth tome is dated six years after. In that tome, the troisieme *Histoire* has this title ; “ Avec quelle ruse Amleth, qui depuis fut roy de Dannemarch, vengea la mort de son pere Horvuendille, occis par Fengon son frere, & autre occurrence de son histoire.” Painter, who has been mention'd before, compil'd his *Palace of Pleasure* almost entirely from Belleforest, taking here and there a novel as pleas'd him, but he did not translate the whole : other novels, it is probable, were translated by different people, and publish'd singly ; this, at least, that we are speaking of, was so, and is intitl'd—*The Historie of Hamblet* ; it is in quarto, and black letter : there can be no doubt made, by persons who are acquainted with these things, that the translation is not much younger than the French original ; though the only edition of it, that is yet come to my knowledge, is no earlier than 1608 : that Shakspeare took his play from it, there can likewise be very little doubt.

1 *Henry IV.*

In the eleven plays that follow—*Macbeth*, *King John*, *Richard II.* *Henry IV.* two parts, *Henry V.* *Henry VI.* three parts, *Richard III.* and *Henry VIII.*—the historians of that time, Hall, Holinshed, Stow, and others, (and, in particular, Holinshed,) are pretty closely follow'd ; and

that not only for their matter, but even sometimes in their expressions: the harangue of the Archbishop of Canterbury in Henry V. that of Queen Catharine in Henry VIII. at her trial, and the king's reply to it, are taken from those chroniclers, and put into verse: other lesser matters are borrow'd from them; and so largely scatter'd up and down in these plays, that whoever would rightly judge of the poet, must acquaint himself with those authors, and his character will not suffer in the enquiry.

Richard III. was preceded by other plays written upon the same subject; concerning which, see the conclusion of a note in this Introduction, at p. 125. And as to Henry V.—it may not be improper to observe in this place, that there is extant another old play, call'd the famous Victories of Henry the Fifth, printed in 1617, quarto; perhaps by some tricking bookseller, who meant to impose it upon the world for Shakspeare's, who dy'd the year before. This play, which opens with that prince's wildness and robberies before he came to the crown, and so comprehends something of the story of both parts of Henry IV. as well as of Henry V.—is a very medley of nonsense and ribaldry; and, it is my firm belief, was prior to Shakspeare's Henries; and the identical “displeasing play” mention'd in the epilogue to 2 Henry IV.; for that such a play should be written after his, or receiv'd upon any stage, has no face of probability. There is a character in it, call'd—Sir John Oldcastle; who holds there the place of Sir John Falstaff, but his very antipodes in every other particular, for it is all dulness: and it is to this character that Shakspeare alludes, in those much-disputed passages; one in his Henry IV. p. 194, and the other in the epilogue to his second part; where the words “for Oldcastle dy'd a martyr” hint at this miserable performance, and it's fate, which was—damnation.

King Lear.

Lear's distressful story has been often told in poems, ballads, and chronicles: but to none of these are we indebted for Shakspeare's Lear; but to a silly old play which first made its appearance in 1605, the title of which is as follows:—“The | True Chronicle Hi- | story of King LEIR, and his three | daughters, Gonorill, Ragan, | and Cordella. As it hath bene divers and sundry | times lately acted. | LONDON, | Printed by Simon Stafford for John |

Wright, and are to bee sold at his shop at | Christes Church dore, next Newgate- | Market. 1605. (4^o I. 4^b.)—As it is a great curiosity, and very scarce, the title is here inserted at large: and for the same reason, and also to shew the use that Shakspeare made of it, some extracts will now be added.

The author of this *Leir* has kept him close to the chronicles; for he ends his play with the reinstating King *Leir* in his throne, by the aid of *Cordella* and her husband. But take the entire fable in his own words. Towards the end of the play, at signature H 3, you find *Leir* in France: upon whose coast he and his friend *Perillus* are landed in so necessitous a condition, that, having nothing to pay their passage, the mariners take their cloaks, leaving them their jerkins in exchange: thus attir'd, they go up further into the country; and there, when they are at the point to perish by famine, insomuch that *Perillus* offers *Leir* his arm to feed upon, they light upon *Gallia* and his queen, whom the author has brought down thitherward, in progress, disguis'd. Their discourse is overheard by *Cordella*, who immediately knows them; but, at her husband's persuasion, forbears to discover herself a while, relieves them with food, and then asks their story; which *Leir* gives her in these words:

“ *Leir*. Then know this first, I am a Brittain borne,
 “ And had three daughters by one loving wife:
 “ And though I say it, of beauty they were sped;
 “ Especially the youngest of the three,
 “ For her perfections hardly matcht could be:
 “ On these I doted with a jelous love,
 “ And thought to try which of them lov'd me best,
 “ By asking of them, which would do most for me?
 “ The first and second flattred me with words,
 “ And vowd they lov'd me better then their lives:
 “ The youngest sayd, she loved me as a child
 “ Might do: her answer I esteem'd most vild,
 “ And presently in an outrageous mood,
 “ I turnd her from me to go sinke or swym:
 “ And all I had, even to the very clothes,
 “ I gave in dowry with the other two:
 “ And she that best deserv'd the greatest share,
 “ I gave her nothing, but disgrace and care.
 “ Now mark the sequel: When I had done thus,
 “ I sojournd in my eldest daughters house,
 “ Where for a time I was intreated well,

" And liv'd in state sufficing my content :
 " But every day her kindnesse did grow cold,
 " Which I with patience put up well ynough
 " And seemed not to see the things I saw :
 " But at the last she grew so far incenst
 " With moody fury, and with causelesse hate,
 " That in most vild and contumelious termes,
 " She bade me pack, and harbour some where else.
 " Then was I fayne for refuge to repayre
 " Unto my other daughter for reliefe,
 " Who gave me pleasing and most courteous words ;
 " But in her actions shewed her selfe so sore,
 " As never any daughter did before :
 " She prayd me in a morning out betime,
 " To go to a thicket two miles from the court,
 " Poynting that there she would come talke with me :
 " There she had set a shaghayrd murdring wretch,
 " To massacre my honest friend and me.

* * * * *

" And now I am constraind to seeke reliefe
 " Of her to whom I have bin so unkind ;
 " Whose censure, if it do award me death,
 " I must confesse she payes me but my due :
 " But if she shew a loving daughters part,
 " It comes of God and her, not my desert.
 " *Cor.* No doubt she will, I dare be sworne she will."

Thereupon ensues her discovery ; and, with it, a circumstance of some beauty, which Shakspeare has borrow'd—(v. Lear, p. 565,) their kneeling to each other, and mutually contending which should ask forgiveness. The next page presents us Gallia, and Mumford who commands under him, marching to embarque their forces, to reinstate Leir ; and the next, a sea-port in Britain, and officers setting a watch, who are to fire a beacon to give notice if any ships approach, in which there is some low humour that is passable enough. Gallia and his forces arrive, and take the town by surprize : immediately upon which, they are encounter'd by the forces of the two elder sisters, and their husbands : a battle ensues : Leir conquers ; he and his friends enter victorious, and the play closes thus :—

" Thanks (worthy Mumford) to thee last of all,
 " Not greeted last, 'cause thy desert was small ;
 " No, thou hast lion-like lay'd on to day,
 " Chasing the Cornwall King and Cambria ;

" Who with my daughters, daughters did I say ?

" To save their lives, the fugitives did play.

" Come, sonne and daughter, who did me advance,

" Repose with me awhile, and then for Fraunce.

" [*Exeunt.*"]

Such is the Leir, now before us. Who the author of it should be, I cannot surmise; for neither in manner nor style has it the least resemblance to any of the other tragedies of that time: most of them rise now and then, and are poetical; but this creeps in one dull tenour, from beginning to end, after the specimen here inserted: it should seem he was a Latinist, by the translation following:

" Feare not, my lord, the perfit good indeed,

" Can never be corrupted by the bad:

" A new fresh vessell still retaynes the taste

" Of that which first is powr'd into the same: " [sign. H.

But whoever he was, Shakspeare has done him the honour to follow him in a stroke or two: one has been observ'd upon above; and the reader, who is acquainted with Shakspeare's Lear, will perceive another in the second line of the concluding speech: and here is a third; " Knowest thou these letters?" says Leir to Ragan, (sign. I. 3^b.) shewing her hers and her sister's letters commanding his death; upon which, she snatches at the letters, and tears them: (v. Lear, p. 590, 591,) another, and that a most signal one upon one account, occurs at signature C 3^b:

" But he, the myrrour of mild patience,

" Puts up all wrongs, and never gives reply: "

Perillus says this of Leir; comprizing therein his character, as drawn by this author: how opposite to that which Shakspeare has given him, all know; and yet he has found means to put nearly the same words into the very mouth of his Lear,—

" No, I will be the pattern of all patience,

" I will say nothing."

Lastly, two of Shakspeare's personages, Kent, and the Steward, seem to owe their existence to the above-mention'd " shag-hair'd wretch," and the Perillus of this Leir.

The episode of Gloster and his two sons is taken from the Arcadia: in which romance there is a chapter thus in-

titl'd;—"The pitifull state, and storie of the Paphlagonian unkinde King, and his kind sonne, first related by the son, then by the blind father." (Arcadia, p. 142, edit. 1590, 4to.) of which episode there are no traces in either chronicle, poem, or play, wherein this history is handl'd.

Love's Labour's Lost.

The fable of this play does not seem to be a work entirely of intention; and I am apt to believe, that it owes its birth to some novel or other, which may one day be discover'd. The character of Armado has some resemblance to Don Quixote; but the play is older than that work of Cervantes: of Holofernes, another singular character, there are some faint traces in a masque of Sir Philip Sidney's that was presented before Queen Elizabeth at Wansted: this masque, call'd in catalogues—*The Lady of May*, is at the end of that author's works, edit. 1627, folio.

Measure for Measure.

In the year 1578, was publish'd in a black-letter quarto a miserable dramattick performance, in two parts, intitl'd—*Promos and Cassandra*; written by one George Whetstone, author likewise of the *Heptameron*, and much other poetry of the same stamp, printed about that time. These plays their author, perhaps, might form upon a novel of Cinthio's; (v. Dec. 8, Nov. 5,) which Shakspeare went not to, but took up with Whetstone's fable, as is evident from the argument of it; which though it be somewhat of the longest, yet take it in his own words.

"The Argument of the whole Historye.

"In the Cytie of Julio (sometimes under the dominion of Corvinus Kinge of Hungarie and Boemia) there was a law, that what man so ever committed adultery, should lose his head, & the woman offender, should wear some disguised apparel, during her life, to make her infamously noted. This severe lawe, by the favour of some mercifull magistrate, became little regarded, untill the time of Lord Promos auctory: who convicting, a yong gentleman named Andrugio of incontineney, condemned, both him, and his minion to the execution of this statute. Andrugio had a very vertuous, and beawtiful gentlewoman to his

sister, named Cassandra : Cassandra to enlarge her brother's life, submitted an humble petition to the Lord Promos : Promos regarding her good behaviours, and fantasying her great beawtie, was much delighted with the sweete order of her talke : and doyng good, that evill might come thereof : for a time, he repyv'd her brother : but wicked man, touning his liking unto unlawfull lust, he set downe the spoile of her honour, raunsome for her Brothers life : Chaste Cassandra, abhorring both him and his sute, by no perswasion would yeald to this raunsome. But in fine, wonne with the importunitye of hir brother (pleading for life :) upon these conditions she agreed to Promos. First that he should pardon her brother, and after marry her. Promos as fearles in promisse, as carelesse in performance, with sollemne vowe, sygned her conditions : but worse than any Infydel, his will satisfyed, he performed neither the one nor the other : for to keepe his authoritye, unspotted with favour, and to prevent Cassandraes clamors, he commaunded the Gayler secretly, to present Cassandra with her brother's head. The Gayler, with the outcryes of Andrugio, (abhorring Promos lewdnes,) by the providence of God, provided thus for his safety. He presented Cassandra with a felons head newlie executed, who, (being mangled, knew it not from her brothers, by the Gayler, who was set at libertie) was so agreeved at this trecherye, that at the pointe to kyl her selfe, she spared that stroke, to be avenged of Promos. And devysing a way, she concluded, to make her fortunes knowne unto the kinge. She (executing this resolution) was so highly favoured of the King, that forthwith he hasted to do justice on Promos : whose judgment was, to marrye Cassandra, to repaire her crased Honour : which donne, for his hainous offence he should lose his head. This maryage solempnised, Cassandra tyed in the greatest bondes of affection to her husband, became an earnest suter for his life : the Kinge (tendringe the generall benefit of the cōmon weale, before her special case, although he favoured her much) would not grant her sute. Andrugio (disguised amonge the company) sorrowing the grieve of his sister, bewrayde his safety, and craved pardon. The Kinge, to renowne the vertues of Cassandra, pardoned both him, and Promos. The circumstances of this rare Historye, in action livelye foloweth."

The play itself opens thus:—

“ Actus I. Scena 1.

“ Promos, Mayor, Shirife, Sworde bearer : One with a bunche
of keyes : Phallax, Promos man.

“ You Officers which now in Julio staye,
“ Knowe you our leadge, the Kinge of Hungarie :
“ Sent me Promos, to ioyne with you in staye :
“ That still we may to Justice have an eye,
“ And now to shew, my rule & power at lardge,
“ Attentivelie, his Letters Patents heare :
“ Phallax reade out my Soberaines charge,
“ Phal. As you commande, I will : give heedful eare.

*“ Phallax readeth the Kinges Letters Patents, which must
be fayre written in parchment, with some great counter-
feat zeale.*

“ Pro. Lo, here you see what is our Soberaines wyl,
“ Lo, heare his wish, that right, not might, beare swaye :
“ Lo, heare his care, to weed from good the yll,
“ To scourge the twights, good Latwes that disobay.”

And thus it proceeds; without one word in it, that Shakspeare could make use of, or can be read with patience by any man living: and yet, besides the characters appearing in the argument, his Bawd Clown, Lucio, Juliet, and the Provost, nay, and even his Barnardine, are created out of hints which this play gave him; and the lines too that are quoted, bad as they are, suggested to him the manner in which his own play opens.

Merchant of Venice.

The Jew of Venice was a story exceedingly well known in Shakspeare's time; celebrated in ballads; and taken (perhaps) originally from an Italian book intitl'd—*Il Pecorone*: the author of which calls himself,—*Ser Giovanni Fiorentino*; and writ his book, as he tells you in some humourous verses at the beginning of it, in 1378, three years after the death of Boccace; it is divided into *giornata's*, and the story we are speaking of is in the first novel of the *giornata quarta*; edit. 1565, octavo, in Vinegia. This novel Shakspeare certainly read; either in the original, or (which I rather think) in some translation that is not now to be met with, and form'd his play upon it.

It was translated anew, and made public in 1755, in a small octavo pamphlet, printed for M. Cooper: and, at the end of it, a novel of Boccace; (the first of day the tenth) which, as the translator rightly judges, might possibly produce the scene of the caskets, substituted by the poet in place of one in the other novel, that was not proper for the stage.

Merry Wives of Windsor.

"Queen Elizabeth," says a writer of Shakspeare's life, "was so well pleas'd with that admirable character of Falstaff, in the two parts of Henry the Fourth, that she commanded him to continue it for one play more, and to shew him in love. This is said to be the occasion of his writing *The Merry Wives of Windsor*." As there is no proof brought for the truth of this story, we may conclude—that it is either some playhouse tradition, or had its rise from Sir William D'Avenant, whose authority the writer quotes for another singular anecdote, relating to Lord Southampton. Be this as it may; Shakspeare, in the conduct of Falstaff's love-adventures, made use of some incidents in a book that has been mention'd before, call'd—*Il Pecorone*; they are in the second novel of that book. It is highly probable, that this novel likewise is in an old English dress somewhere or other; and from thence transplanted into a foolish book, call'd—*The fortunate, the deceiv'd, and the unfortunate Lovers*; printed in 1685, octavo, for William Whittwood; where the reader may see it, at p. 1. Let me add too, that there is a like story in the—"Piacevoli Notti, di Straparola, libro primo; at Notte quarta, Favola quarta; edit. 1567, octavo, in Vinea."

Midsummer-Night's Dream.

The history of our old poets is so little known, and the first editions of their works become so very scarce, that it is hard pronouncing any thing certain about them: but, if that pretty fantastical poem of Drayton's, call'd—*Nymphidia, or The Court of Fairy*, be early enough in time, (as, I believe, it is; for I have seen an edition of that author's pastorals, printed in 1593, quarto,) it is not improbable, that Shakspeare took from thence the hint of his fairies: a line of that poem, "Thorough bush, thorough briar," occurs also in his play. The rest of the play is, doubtless, invention: the names only of Theseus,

Hippolita, and Theseus' former loves, Antiopa and others, being historical; and taken from the translated Plutarch, in the article—Theseus.

Much Ado about Nothing.

“Timbree de Cardōne deviēt amoureux à Messine de Fenicie Leonati, & des divers & estrāges accidens qui advindrēt avāt qu'il l'espousast.”—is the title of another novel in the *Histoires Tragiques* of Belleforest; Tom. 3. Hist. 18: it is taken from one of Bandello's, which you may see in the first tome, at p. 150, of the London edition in quarto, a copy from that of Lucca in 1554. This French novel comes the nearest to the fable of *Much Ado about Nothing*, of any thing that has yet been discovered, and is (perhaps) the foundation of it. There is a story something like it in the fifth book of *Orlando Furioso*: (v. Sir John Harrington's translation of it, edit. 1591, folio) and another in *Spencer's Fairy Queen*.

Othello.

Cinthio, the best of the Italian writers next to Boccace, has a novel thus intitl'd:—“Un Capitano Moro piglia per mogliera una cittadina venetiana, un suo Alfieri l'accusa de adulterio al [read, *il*, with a colon after—*adulterio*] Marito, cerca, che l'Afieri uccida colui, ch'egli credea l'Adultero, il Capitano uccide la Moglie, è accusato dallo Alfieri, non confessa il Moro, ma essendovi chiari inditii, è bandito, Et lo scelerato Alfieri, credendo nuocere ad altri, procaccia à sè la morte miseramente.” *Hecatommithi*, Dec. 3, Nov. 7; edit. 1565, two tomes, octavo. If there was no translation of this novel, French or English; nor any thing built upon it, either in prose or verse, near enough in time for Shakspeare to take his *Othello* from them; we must, I think, conclude—that he had it from the Italian; for the story (at least, in all its main circumstances) is apparently the same.

Romeo and Juliet.

This very affecting story is likewise a true one; it made a great noise at the time it happen'd, and was soon taken up by poets and novel-writers. Bandello has one; it is the ninth of tome the second: and there is another, and much better, left us by some anonymous writer; of which I have an edition, printed in 1553 at Venice, one year

before *Bandello*, which yet was not the first. Some small time after, *Pierre Boistean*, a French writer, put out one upon the same subject, taken from these Italians, but much alter'd and enlarg'd: this novel, together with five others of *Boistean's* penning, *Belleforest* took; and they now stand at the beginning of his *Histoires Tragiques*, edition before-mention'd. But it had some prior edition; which falling into the hands of a countryman of ours, he converted it into a poem; altering, and adding many things to it of his own, and publish'd it in 1562, without a name, in a small octavo volume, printed by *Richard Tottill*; and his poem, which is call'd—*The Tragical Historie of Romeus and Juliet*, is the origin of *Shakspeare's* play: who not only follows it even minutely in the conduct of his fable, and that in those places where it differs from the other writers; but has also borrow'd from it some few thoughts, and expressions. At the end of a small poetical miscellany, publish'd by one *George Turberville* in 1570, there is a poem—"On the death of Maister Arthur Brooke drown'd in passing to New-haven;" in which it appears, that this gentleman, (who, it is likely, was a military man,) was the writer of *Romeus and Juliet*. In the second tome of *The Palace of Pleasure*, (Nov. 25,) there is a prose translation of *Boistean's* novel; but *Shakspeare* made no use of it.

Taming of the Shrew.

Nothing has yet been produc'd that is likely to have given the poet occasion for writing this play, neither has it (in truth) the air of a novel, so that we may reasonably suppose it a work of invention; that part of it, I mean, which gives it it's title. For one of it's underwalks, or plots,—to wit, the story of *Lucentio*, in almost all it's branches, (his love-affair, and the artificial conduct of it; the pleasant incident of the *Pedant*; and the characters of *Vincentio*, *Tranio*, *Gremio*, and *Biondello*,) is form'd upon a comedy of *George Gascoigne's*, call'd—*Supposes*, a translation from *Ariosto's I Suppositi*: which comedy was acted by the gentlemen of *Grey's Inn* in 1566; and may be seen in the translator's works, of which there are several old editions: and the odd induction of this play is taken from *Goulart's Histoires admirables de notre Temps*; who relates it as a real fact, practis'd upon a mean artisan at *Brussels* by *Philip the good*, duke of *Burgundy*. *Gou-*

part was translated into English, by one Edw. Grimeston: the edition I have of it, was printed in 1607, quarto, by George Eld; where this story may be found, at p. 587: but, for any thing that there appears to the contrary, the book might have been printed before.

Tempest.

The *Tempest* has rather more of the novel in it than the play that was last spoken of: but no one has yet pretended to have met with such a novel; nor any thing else, that can be suppos'd to have furnish'd Shakspeare with materials for writing this play: the fable of which must therefore pass for entirely his own production, 'till the contrary can be made appear by any future discovery. One of the poet's editors, after observing that—the persons of the drama are all Italians; and the unities all regularly observ'd in it, a custom likewise of the Italians; concludes his note with the mention of two of their plays, —*Il Negromante di L. Ariosto*, and *Il Negromante Palliato di Gio. Angelo Petrucci*; one or other of which, he seems to think, may give rise to the *Tempest*: but he is mistaken in both of them; and the last must needs be out of the question, being later than Shakspeare's time.

Titus Andronicus.

An old ballad, whose date and time of writing can not be ascertain'd, is the ground work of *Titus Andronicus*; the names of the persons acting, and almost every incident of the play are there in miniature:—it is, indeed, so like,—that one might be tempted to suspect, that the ballad was form'd upon the play, and not that upon the ballad; were it not sufficiently known, that almost all the compositions of that sort are prior to even the infancy of Shakspeare.

Troilus and Cressida.

The loves of *Troilus* and *Cressida* are celebrated by Chaucer: whose poem might, perhaps, induce Shakspeare to work them up into a play. The other matters of that play (historical, or fabulous, call them which you will,) he had out of an ancient book, written and printed first by Caxton, call'd—*The Destruction of Troy*, in three parts: in the third part of it, are many strange particulars, occurring no where else, which Shakspeare has admitted into his play.

Twelfth Night.

Another of Belleforest's novels is thus intitl'd : " Comme une fille Romaine se vestant en page servist long temps un sien amy sans estre cogneue, & depuis l'eut a mary avec autres divers discours." *Histoires Tragiques* ; Tom. 4, Hist. 7. This novel, which is itself taken from one of Bandello's, (v. Tom. 2, Nov. 36,) is, to all appearance, the foundation of the serious part of *Twelfth-Night* : and must be so accounted ; 'till some English novel appears, built (perhaps) upon that French one, but approaching nearer to Shakspeare's comedy.

Two Gentlemen of Verona.

Julia's love adventures being in some respects the same with those of Viola in *Twelfth-Night*, the same novel might give rise to them both ; and Valentine's falling amongst out-laws, and becoming their captain, is an incident that has some resemblance to one in the *Arcadia*, (book i. chap. 6,) where Pyrocles heads the Helots : all the other circumstances which constitute the fable of this play, are, probably of the poet's own invention.

Winter's Tale.

To the story-book, or Pleasant History (as it is call'd) of Dorastus and Fawnia, written by Robert Greene, M.A. we are indebted for Shakspeare's *Winter's Tale*. Greene join'd with Dr. Lodge in writing a play, call'd *A Looking-Glass for London and England*, printed in 1598, in quarto, and black letter ; and many of his other works, which are very numerous, were publish'd about that time, and this amongst the rest : it went through many impressions, all of the same form and letter as the play ; and that so low down as the year 1664, of which year I have a copy. Upon this occasion, I shall venture to pronounce an opinion, that has been reserv'd for this place, (though other plays too were concern'd in it, as *Hamlet* and *Cymbeline*) which if it be found true, as I believe it will, may be of use to settle many disputed points in literary chronology. My opinion is this :—that almost all books, of the gothick or black character, printed any thing late in the seventeenth century, are in truth only re-impressions ; they have pass'd the press before in the preceding century, or (at least) very soon after. For the character began

then to be disus'd in the printing of new books: but the types remaining, the owners of them found a convenience in using them for books that had been before printed in them; and to this convenience of theirs are owing all or most of those impressions posterior to 1600. It is left to the reader's sagacity, to apply this remark to the book in the present article: and to those he finds mention'd before, in the articles—Hamlet and Cymbeline.

Such are the materials, out of which this great poet has rais'd a structure, which no time shall efface, nor any envy be strong enough to lessen the admiration that is so justly due to it; which if it was great before, cannot fail to receive encrease with the judicious, when the account that has been now given them is reflected upon duly: other originals have, indeed, been pretended; and much extraordinary criticism has, at different times, and by different people, been spun out of those conceits; but, except some few articles in which the writer professes openly his ignorance of the sources they are drawn from, and some others in which he delivers himself doubtfully, what is said in the preceding leaves concerning these fables may with all certainty be rely'd upon.

How much is it to be wish'd, that something equally certain, and indeed worthy to be intitl'd—a Life of Shakspeare, could accompany this relation, and complete the tale of those pieces which the publick is apt to expect before new editions? But that nothing of this sort is at present in being, may be said without breach of candour, as we think, or suspicion of over much niceness: an imperfect and loose account of his father, and family; his own marriage, and the issue of it; some traditional stories,—many of them trifling in themselves, supported by small authority, and seemingly ill-grounded; together with his life's final period as gather'd from his monument, is the full and whole amount of historical matter that is in any of these writings; in which the critick and essayist swallow up the biographer, who yet ought to take the lead in them. The truth is, the occurrences of this most interesting life (we mean, the private ones) are irrecoverably lost to us; the friendly office of registering them was overlook'd by those who alone had it in their power, and our enquiries about them now must prove vain and thrown away. But there is another sort of them that is not quite so hopeless; which besides affording us the prospect of

some good issue to our endeavours, do also invite us to them by the promise of a much better reward for them: the knowledge of his private life had done little more than gratify our curiosity, but his publick one as a writer would have consequences more important; a discovery there would throw a new light upon many of his pieces; and, where rashness only is shew'd in the opinions that are now current about them, a judgment might then be form'd, which perhaps would do credit to the giver of it. When he commenc'd a writer for the stage, and in which play; what the order of the rest of them, and (if that be discoverable) what the occasion; and, lastly, for which of the numerous theatres that were then subsisting they were severally written at first,—are the particulars that should chiefly engage the attention of a writer of Shakspeare's Life, and be the principal subjects of his enquiry: to assist him in which, the first impressions of these plays will do something, and their title-pages at large, which, upon that account, we mean to give in another work that will accompany *The School of Shakspeare*; and something the School itself will afford, that may contribute to the same service: but the corner-stone of all, must be—the works of the poet himself, from which much may be extracted by a heedful peruser of them; and, for the sake of such a peruser, and by way of putting him into the train when the plays are before him, we shall instance in one of them;—the time in which *Henry V.* was written, is determin'd almost precisely by a passage in the chorus to the fifth act, and the concluding chorus of it contains matter relative to *Henry VI.*: other plays might be mention'd, as *Henry VIII.* and *Macbeth*; but this one may be sufficient to answer our intention in producing it, which was—to spirit some one up to this task in some future time, by shewing the possibility of it; which he may be further convinc'd of, if he reflects what great things have been done, by criticks amongst ourselves, upon subjects of this sort, and of a more remov'd antiquity than he is concern'd in. A Life thus constructed, interspers'd with such anecdotes of common notoriety as the writer's judgment shall tell him—are worth regard; together with some memorials of this poet that are happily come down to us; such as, an instrument in the *Heralds' Office*, confirming arms to his father; a Patent preserv'd in *Rymer*, granted by *James the First*; his last Will and Testament, extant

now at Doctors Commons; his Stratford monument, and a monument of his daughter which is said to be there also;—such a Life would rise quickly into a volume; especially, with the addition of one proper and even necessary episode—a brief history of our drama, from its origin down to the poet's death: even the stage he appear'd upon, it's form, dressings, actors should be enquir'd into, as every one of those circumstances had some considerable effect upon what he compos'd for it: The subject is certainly a good one, and will fall (we hope) ere it be long into the hands of some good writer; by whose abilities this great want may at length be made up to us, and the world of letters enrich'd by the happy acquisition of a masterly Life of Shakspeare. CAPELL.

MR. STEEVENS'S
ADVERTISEMENT
TO THE
READER*.

THE want of adherence to the old copies, which has been complained of, in the text of every modern republication of Shakspeare, is fairly deducible from Mr. Rowe's inattention to one of the first duties of an editor†. Mr. Rowe did not print from the earliest and most correct, but from the most remote and inaccurate of the four folios. Between the years 1623 and 1685 (the dates of the first and last) the errors in every play, at least, were trebled. Several pages in each of these ancient editions have been examined, that the assertion might come more fully supported. It may be added, that as every fresh editor con-

* First printed in 1773. MALONE.

† "I must not (says Mr. Rowe in his dedication to the Duke of Somerset) pretend to have restor'd this work to the exactness of the author's original manuscripts: those, are lost, or, at least, are gone beyond any enquiry I could make; so that there was nothing left, but to *compare the several editions*, and give the true reading as well as I could from thence. This I have endeavour'd to do pretty carefully, and render'd very many places intelligible, that were not so before. In some of the editions, especially the last, there were many lines (and in Hamlet one whole scene) left out together; these are now all supply'd. I fear your grace will find some faults, but I hope they are mostly literal, and the errors of the press." Would not any one, from this declaration, suppose that Mr. Rowe (who does not appear to have consulted a single quarto) had at least *compared* the folios with each other?

STEEVENS.

tinued to make the text of his predecessor the groundwork of his own (never collating but where difficulties occurred) some deviations from the originals had been handed down, the number of which are lessened in the impression before us, as it has been constantly compared with the most authentick copies, whether collation was absolutely necessary for the recovery of sense, or not. The person who undertook this task may have failed by inadvertency, as well as those who preceded him; but the reader may be assured, that he, who thought it his duty to free an author from such modern and unnecessary innovations as had been censured in others, has not ventured to introduce any of his own.

It is not pretended that a complete body of various readings is here collected; or that all the diversities which the copies exhibit, are pointed out; as near two thirds of them are typographical mistakes, or such a change of insignificant particles, as would croud the bottom of the page with an ostentation of materials, from which at last nothing useful could be selected.

The dialogue might indeed sometimes be lengthened by other insertions than have hitherto been made, but without advantage either to its spirit or beauty as in the following instance:

“ *Lear.* No.

“ *Kent.* Yes.

“ *Lear.* No, I say.

“ *Kent.* I say, yea.”

Here the quartos add:

“ *Lear.* No, no, *they would not.*

“ *Kent.* Yes, *they have.*”

By the admission of this negation and affirmation, has any new idea been gained?

The labours of preceding editors have not left room for a boast, that many valuable readings have been retrieved; though it may be fairly asserted that the text of Shakspeare is restored to the condition in which the author, or rather his first publishers, appear to have left it, such emendations as were absolutely necessary, alone admitted: for where a particle, indispensably necessary to the sense was wanting, such a supply has been silently

adopted from other editions; but where a syllable, or more, had been added for the sake of the metre only, which at first might have been irregular*, such interpolations are here constantly retrenched, sometimes with, and sometimes without notice. Those speeches, which in the elder editions are printed as prose, and from their own construction are incapable of being compressed into verse, without the aid of supplemental syllables, are restored to prose again, and the measure is divided afresh in others, where the mass of words had been inharmoniously separated into lines.

The scenery, throughout all the plays, is regulated in conformity to a rule, which the poet, by his general practice seems to have proposed to himself. Several of his pieces are come down to us, divided into scenes as well as acts. These divisions were probably his own, as they are made on settled principles, which would hardly have been the case, had the task been executed by the players. A change of scene, with Shakspeare, most commonly implies a change of place, but always an entire evacuation of the stage. The custom of distinguishing every entrance or exit by a fresh scene, was adopted, perhaps very idly, from the French theatre.

For the length of many notes, and the accumulation of examples in others, some apology may be likewise expected. An attempt at brevity is often found to be the source of an imperfect explanation. Where a passage has been constantly misunderstood, or where the jest or pleasantry has been suffered to remain long in obscurity, more instances have been brought to clear the one, or elucidate the other, than appear at first sight to have been necessary. For these it can only be said, that when they prove that phraseology or source of merriment to have been once general, which at present seems particular, they are not quite impertinently intruded; as they may serve to free the author from a suspicion of having employed an affected singularity of expression, or indulged himself in allusions to transient customs, which were not of sufficient notoriety to deserve ridicule or reprehension. When examples in favour of contradictory opinions are assembled, though no attempt is made to decide on either part, such

* I retract this supposition, which was too hastily formed. See note on *The Tempest*, vol. xv. p. 84, n. 2. STEEVENS.

neutral collections should always be regarded as materials for future criticks, who may hereafter apply them with success. Authorities, whether in respect of words, or things, are not always producible from the most celebrated writers*; yet such circumstances as fall below the notice of history, can only be sought in the jest-book, the satire, or the play; and the novel, whose fashion did not outlive a week, is sometimes necessary to throw light on those annals which take in the compass of an age. Those, therefore, who would wish to have the peculiarities of

* Mr. T. Warton in his excellent Remarks on the Fairy Queen of Spenser, offers a similar apology for having introduced illustrations from obsolete literature. "I fear (says he) I shall be censured for quoting too many pieces of this sort. But experience has fatally proved, that the commentator on Spenser, Jonson, and the rest of our elder poets, will in vain give specimens of his classical erudition, unless, at the same time, he brings to his work a mind intimately acquainted with those books, which, though now forgotten, were yet in common use and high reputation about the time in which his authors respectively wrote, and which they consequently must have read. While these are unknown, many allusions and many imitations will either remain obscure, or lose half their beauty and propriety: 'as the figures vanish when the canvas is decayed.'

"Pope laughs at Theobald for giving us, in his edition of Shakspeare, a sample of

"——all such READING as was never read."

But these strange and ridiculous books which Theobald quoted, were unluckily the very books which Shakspeare himself had studied: the knowledge of which enabled that useful editor to explain so many different allusions and obsolete customs in his poet, which otherwise could never have been understood. For want of this sort of literature, Pope tells us that the *dreadful* Sagittary in Troilus and Cressida, signifies Teucer, so celebrated for his skill in archery. Had he deigned to consult an old history, called The Destruction of Troy, a book which was the delight of Shakspeare and of his age, he would have found that this formidable archer, was no other than an imaginary beast, which the Grecian army brought against Troy. If Shakspeare is worth reading, he is worth explaining; and the researches used for so valuable and elegant a purpose, merit the thanks of genius and candour, not the satire of prejudice and ignorance. That labour, which so essentially contributes to the service of true taste, deserves a more honourable repository than The Temple of Dulness." STEEVENS.

Nym familiarized to their ideas, must excuse the insertion of such an epigram as best suits the purpose, however tedious in itself; and such as would be acquainted with the propriety of Falstaff's allusion to *stewed prunes*, should not be disgusted at a multitude of instances, which, when the point is once known to be established, may be diminished by any future editor. An author who "catches," as Pope expresses it, at "the Cynthia of a minute," and does not furnish notes to his own works, is sure to lose half the praise which he might have claimed, had he dealt in allusions less temporary, or cleared up for himself those difficulties which lapse of time must inevitably create.

The author of the additional notes has rather been desirous to support old readings, than to claim the merit of introducing new ones. He desires to be regarded as one, who found the task he undertook more arduous than it seemed, while he was yet feeding his vanity with the hopes of introducing himself to the world as an editor in form. He, who has discovered in himself the power to rectify a few mistakes with ease, is naturally led to imagine, that all difficulties must yield to the efforts of future labour; and perhaps feels a reluctance to be undeceived at last.

Mr. Steevens desires it may be observed, that he has strictly complied with the terms exhibited in his proposals, having appropriated all such assistances, as he received, to the use of the present editor, whose judgment has, in every instance, determined on their respective merits. While he enumerates his obligations to his correspondents, it is necessary that one comprehensive remark should be made on such communications as are omitted in this edition, though they might have proved of great advantage to a more daring commentator. The majority of these were founded on the supposition, that Shakspeare was originally an author correct in the utmost degree, but maimed and interpolated by the neglect or presumption of the players. In consequence of this belief, alterations have been proposed wherever a verse could be harmonized, an epithet exchanged for one more apposite, or a sentiment rendered less perplexed. Had the general current of advice been followed, the notes would have been filled with attempts at emendation apparently unnecessary, though sometimes elegant, and as frequently with explanations of what none would have thought difficult. A constant peruser of Shakspeare will suppose

whatever is easy to his own apprehension, will prove so to that of others, and consequently may pass over some real perplexities in silence. On the contrary, if in consideration of the different abilities of every class of readers, he should offer a comment on all harsh inversions of phrase, or peculiarities of expression, he will at once excite the disgust and displeasure of such as think their own knowledge or sagacity undervalued. It is difficult to fix a medium between doing too little and too much in the task of mere explanation. There are yet many passages unexplained and unintelligible, which may be reformed, at hazard of whatever licence, for exhibitions on the stage, in which the pleasure of the audience is chiefly to be considered; but must remain untouched by the critical editor, whose conjectures are limited by narrow bounds, and who gives only what he at least supposes his author to have written.

If it is not to be expected that each vitiated passage in Shakspeare can be restored, till a greater latitude of experiment shall be allowed; so neither can it be supposed that the force of all his allusions will be pointed out, till such books are thoroughly examined, as cannot easily at present be collected, if at all. Several of the most correct lists of our dramattick pieces exhibit the titles of plays, which are not to be met with in the completest collections. It is almost unnecessary to mention any other than Mr. Garrick's, which, curious and extensive as it is, derives its greatest value from its accessibility.*

* There is reason to think that about the time of the Reformation, great numbers of plays were printed, though few of that age are now to be found; for part of Queen Elizabeth's *injunctions* in 1559, are particularly directed to the suppressing of "Many pamphlets, *playes*, and ballads: that no manner of person shall enterprize to print any such, &c. but under certain restrictions." Vid. Sect. V. This observation is taken from Dr. Percy's additions to his Essay on the Origin of the English Stage. It appears likewise from a page at the conclusion of the second volume of the entries belonging to the Stationers Company, that in the 41st year of Queen Elizabeth, many new restraints on booksellers were laid. Among these are the following: "That no playes be printed excepte they bee allowed by such as have auctoritie." The records of the Stationers, however, contain the entries of some which have never yet been met with by the most successful collectors; nor are their titles to be found in any

To the other evils of our civil war must be added the interruption of polite learning, and the suppression of

registers of the stage, whether ancient or modern. It should seem from the same volumes that it was customary for the Stationers to seize the whole impression of any work that had given offence, and burn it publicly at their hall, in obedience to the edicts of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Bishop of London, who sometimes enjoyed these literary executions at their respective palaces. Among other works condemned to the flames by these discerning prelates, were the complete Satires of Bishop Hall.*

Mr. Theobald, at the conclusion of the preface to his first edition of Shakspeare, asserts, that exclusive of the dramas of Ben Jonson, and Beaumont and Fletcher, he had read "above 800 of old English plays." He omitted this assertion, however, on the republication of the same work, and, I hope, he did so, through a consciousness of its utter falsehood; for if we except the plays of the authors already mentioned, it would be difficult to discover half the number that were written early enough to serve the purpose for which he pretends to have perused the imaginary stock of ancient literature.

I might add, that the private collection of Mr. Theobald, which, including the plays of Jonson, Fletcher, and Shakspeare, did not amount to many more than an hundred, remained entire in the hands of the late Mr. Tonson, till the time of his death. It does not appear that any other collection but the Harleian was at that time formed; nor does Mr. Theobald's edition contain any intrinsick evidences of so comprehensive an examination of our eldest dramattick writers, as he assumes to himself the merit of having made. STEEVENS.

Whatever Mr. Theobald might venture to assert, there is sufficient evidence existing that at the time of his death he was not possessed of more than 295 quarto plays in the whole, and some of these, it is probable, were different editions of the same play. He died shortly after the 6th of September, 1744. On the 20th of October his library was advertized to be sold by auction, by Charles Corbett, and on the third day was the following lot: "295 Old English Plays in quarto, some of them so scarce as not to be had at any price: to many of which are MSS. notes and

* Law, Physick, and Divinity, bl. l. may be found on every stall. Plays, poetry, and novels, were destroyed *publickly* by the Bishops, and *privately* by the Puritans. Hence the infinite number of them entirely lost, for which *licenses* were procured, &c. FARMER.

many dramattick and poetical names, which were plunged in obscurity by tumults and revolutions, and have never since attracted curiosity. The utter neglect of ancient English literature continued so long, that many books may be supposed to be lost; and that curiosity, which has been now for some years increasing among us, wants materials for its operations. Books and pamphlets, printed originally in small numbers, being thus neglected, were soon destroyed; and though the capital authors were preserved, they were preserved to languish without regard. How little Shakspeare himself was once read, may be understood from Tate,* who, in his dedication to the

remarks by Mr. Theobald, all done up neatly in boards in single plays. They will all be sold in one lot." REED.

There were about five hundred and fifty plays printed before the Restoration, exclusive of those written by Shakspeare, Jonson, and Fletcher. MALONE.

* In the year 1707 Mr. N. Tate published a tragedy called *Injured Love, or the Cruel Husband*, and in the title-page calls himself "*Author of the tragedy called King Lear*."

In a book called *The Actor, or a Treatise on the Art of Playing*, 12mo. published in 1750, and imputed to Dr. Hill, is the following pretended extract from *Romeo and Juliet*, with the author's remark on it:

"The saints that heard our vows and know our love,
 "Seeing thy faith and thy unspotted truth,
 "Will sure take care, and let no wrongs annoy thee.
 "Upon my knees I'll ask them every day
 "How my kind Juliet does; and every night,
 "In the severe distresses of my fate,
 "As I perhaps shall wander through the desert,
 "And want a place to rest my weary head on,
 "I'll count the stars, and bless 'em as they shine,
 "And court them all for my dear Juliet's safety."

"The reader will pardon us on this and some other occasions, that where we quote passages from plays, we give them *as the author gives them*, | *not as the butcherly hand of a blockhead prompter may have lopped them, or as the unequal genius of some bungling critic may have attempted to mend them*. Whoever remembers the merit of the player's speaking the things we celebrate them for, we are pretty confident will wish he spoke them *absolutely as we give them, that is, as the author gives them*."

Perhaps it is unnecessary to inform the reader that not one of

altered play of King Lear, speaks of the original as an obscure piece, recommended to his notice by a friend; and the author of the Tatler having occasion to quote a few lines out of Macbeth was content to receive them from D'Avenant's alteration of that celebrated drama, in which almost every original beauty is either awkwardly disguised, or arbitrarily omitted. So little were the defects or peculiarities of the old writers known, even at the beginning of our century, that though the custom of alliteration had prevailed to that degree in the time of Shakspeare, that it became contemptible and ridiculous, yet it is made one of Waller's praises by a writer of his life, that he first introduced this practice into English versification.

It will be expected that some notice should be taken of the last editor [Mr. Capell] of Shakspeare, and that his merits should be estimated with those of his predecessors. Little, however, can be said of a work, to the completion of which, both a large proportion of the commentary and various readings is yet wanting. The Second Part of King Henry VI. is the only play from that edition, which has been consulted in the course of this work; for as several passages there are arbitrarily omitted, and as no notice is given when other deviations are made from the old copies, it was of little consequence to examine any further. This circumstance is mentioned, lest such accidental coincidences of opinion, as may be discovered hereafter, should be interpreted into plagiarism.

It may occasionally happen, that some of the remarks long ago produced by others, are offered again as recent discoveries. It is likewise absolutely impossible to pronounce with any degree of certainty, whence all the hints, which furnish matter for a commentary, have been collected, as they lay scattered in many books and papers, which were probably never read but once, or the particulars which they contain received only in the course of common conversation; nay, what is called plagiarism, is often no more than the result of having thought alike with others on the same subject.

the lines above quoted, is to be found in the Romeo and Juliet of Shakspeare. They are copied from the Caius Marius of Otway. STEEVENS.

The dispute about the learning of Shakspeare being now finally settled, a catalogue is added of those translated authors, whom Mr. Pope has thought proper to call

“ The classicks of an age that *heard of none.*”

The reader may not be displeased to have the Greek and Roman poets, orators, &c. who had been rendered accessible to our author, exposed at one view ;* especially as the list has received the advantage of being corrected and amplified by the Reverend Dr. Farmer, the substance of whose very decisive pamphlet is interspersed through the notes which are added in this revisal of Dr. Johnson's Shakspeare.

To those who have advanced the reputation of our poet, it has been endeavoured, by Dr. Johnson, in a foregoing preface, impartially to allot their dividend of fame ; and it is with great regret that we now add to the catalogue, another, the consequence of whose death will perhaps affect not only the works of Shakspeare, but of many other writers. Soon after the first appearance of this edition, a disease, rapid in its progress, deprived the world of Mr. Jacob Tonson ; a man, whose zeal for the improvement of English literature, and whose liberality to men of learning, gave him a just title to all the honours which men of learning can bestow. To suppose that a person employed in an extensive trade, lived in a state of indifference to loss and gain, would be to conceive a character incredible and romantick ; but it may be justly said of Mr. Tonson, that he had enlarged his mind beyond solicitude about petty losses, and refined it from the desire of unreasonable profit. He was willing to admit those with whom he contracted, to the just advantage of their own labours ; and had never learned to consider the author as an under-agent to the bookseller. The wealth which he inherited or acquired, he enjoyed like a man conscious of the dignity of a profession subservient to learning. His domestick life was elegant, and his charity was liberal. His manners were soft, and his conversation delicate : nor is, perhaps, any quality in him more to be censured, than that reserve which confined his acquaintance to a small number, and made his example less useful, as it was less extensive. He was the last commercial

* A list of them is appended to Dr. Farmer's essay. BOSWELL.

name of a family which will be long remembered; and if Horace thought it not improper to convey the *Sosii* to posterity; if rhetorick suffered no dishonour from Quintilian's dedication to Trypho; let it not be thought that we disgrace Shakspeare, by appending to his works the name of Tonson.

To this prefatory advertisement I have now subjoined * a chapter extracted from the *Guls Hornbook*, (a satirical pamphlet written by Decker in the year 1609) as it affords the reader a more complete idea of the customs peculiar to our ancient theatres, than any other publication which has hitherto fallen in my way. See this performance, page 27. [Quarto 1609.]

“ CHAP. VI.

“ *How a Gallant should behave himself in a Play-house.*

“ The *theatre* is your poet's Royal Exchange, upon which, their muses (that are now turned to merchants) meeting, barter away that light commodity of words for a lighter ware than words, *plaudities* and the *breath* of the great *beast*, which (like the threatenings of two cowards) vanish all into aire. *Plaiers* and their *factors*, who put away the stuffe and make the best of it they possibly can (as indeed 'tis their parts so to doe) your gallant, your courtier, and your capten, had wont to be the soundest pay-masters, and I thinke are still the surest chapmen: and these by meanes that their heades are well stockt, deale upon this comical freight by the grosse; when your *groundling*, and *gallery commoner* buyes his sport by the penny, and, like a *hagler*, is glad to utter it againe by retailing.

“ Sithence then the place is so free in entertainment, allowing a stoole as well to the farmer's sonne as to your Templer: that your stinkard has the self same libertie to be there in his tobacco fumes, which your sweet courtier hath: and that your carman and tinker claime as strong a voice in their suffrage, and sit to give judgment on the plaies' life and death, as well as the proudest Momus among the tribe of Critick; it is fit y^e hee, whom the

* This addition to Mr. Steevens's Advertisement was made in 1778. MALONE.

most tailors' bills do make room for, when he comes, should not be basely (like a vyoll) cas'd up in a corner.

"Whether therefore the gatherers of the publique or private play-house stand to receive the afternoone's rent, let our gallant (having paid it) presently advance himself up to the throne of the stage. I meane, not in the lords' roome (which is now but the stage's suburbs). No, those boxes by the iniquity of custome, conspiracy of waiting-women, and gentlemen-ushers, that there sweat together, and the covetous sharers, are contemptibly thrust into the reare, and much new satten is there dambd by being smothered to death in darknesse. But on the very rushes where the comedy is to daunce, yea and under the state of Cambises himselfe must our feather'd estridge, like a piece of ordnance be planted valiantly (because impudently) beating downe the mewes and hisses of the opposed rascality.

"For do but cast up a reckoning, what large cummings in are purs'd up by sitting on the stage. First a conspicuous eminence is gotten, by which meanes the best and most essential parts of a gallant (good cloathes, a proportionable legge, white hand, the Persian locke, and a tollerable beard,) are perfectly revealed.

"By sitting on the stage you have a sign'd pattent to engrosse the whole commodity of censure; may lawfully presume to be a girder; and stand at the helme to steere the passage of scænes, yet no man shall once offer to hinder you from obtaining the title of an insolent overweening coxcombe.

"By sitting on the stage, you may (without traueilling for it) at the very next doore, aske whose play it is: and by that quest of inquiry, the law warrants you to avoid much mistaking: if you know not the author, you may raile against him; and peradventure so behave yourselfe, that you may enforce the author to know you.

"By sitting on the stage, if you be a knight, you may happily get you a mistresse: if a mere Fleet-street gentleman, a wife: but assure yourselfe by continuall residence, you are the first and principall man in election to begin the number of We three.

"By spreading your body on the stage, and by being a justice in examining of plaies, you shall put yourselfe into such a true scænical authority, that some poet shall not dare to present his muse rudely before your eyes,

without having first unmaskt her, rifled her, and discovered all her bare and most mystical parts before you at a tavern, when you most knightly, shal for his paines, pay for both their suppers.

“ By sitting on the stage, you may (with small cost) purchase the deere acquaintance of the boyes: have a good stoole for sixpence: at any time know what particular part any of the infants present: get your match lighted, examine the play-suits’ lace, perhaps win wagers upon laying ’tis copper, &c. And to conclude, whether you be a foole or a justice of peace, a cuckold or a capten, a lord maiors sonne or a dawcocke, a knave or an under shrieve, of what stamp soever you be, currant or counterfet, the stage-like time will bring you to most perfect light, and lay you open: neither are you to be hunted from thence though the scarcrowes in the yard hoot you, hisse at you, spit at you, yea throw dirt even in your teeth: ’tis most gentleman-like patience to endure all this, and to laugh at the silly animals. But if the rabble, with a full throat, crie away with the foole, you were worse than a mad-man to tarry by it: for the gentleman and the foole should never sit on the stage together.

“ Mary, let this observation go hand in hand with the rest: or rather, like a country-serving man, some five yards before them. Present not your selfe on the stage (especially at a new play) untill the quaking prologue hath (by rubbing) got cullor into his cheekes, and is ready to give the trumpets their cue that hees upon point to enter: for then it is time, as though you were one of the *properties*, or that you dropt of the *hangings*, to creep behind the arras, with your *tripos* or three-legged stoole in one hand, and a teston mounted betweene a fore-finger and a thumbe, in the other; for if you should bestow your person upon the vulgar, when the belly of the house is but halfe full, your apparell is quite eaten up, the fashion lost, and the proportion of your body in more danger to be devoured, then if it were served up in the Counter amongst the Poultry: avoid that as you would the bas-tome. It shall crowne you with rich commendation, to laugh alowd in the midst of the most serious and saddest scene of the terriblest tragedy: and to let that clapper (your tongue) be tost so high that all the house may ring of it: your lords use it; your knights are apes to the lords, and do so too: your inne-a-court-man is

zany to the knights, and (many very scurvily) comes likewise limping after it: bee thou a beagle to them all, and never lin snuffing till you have scented them: for by talking and laughing (like a ploughman in a morris) you heap Pelion upon Ossa, glory upon glory: as first all the eyes in the galleries will leave walking after the players, and onely follow you: the simplest dolt in the house snatches up your name, and when he meetes you in the streetes, or that you fall into his hands in the middle of a watch, his word shall be taken for you: hele cry, "He's such a gallant," and you passe. Secondly you publish your temperance to the world, in that you seeme not to resort thither to taste vaine pleasures with a hungrie appetite; but onely as a gentleman, to spend a foolish houre or two, because you can doe nothing else. Thirdly you mightily disrelish the audience, and disgrace the author: marry, you take up (though it be at the worst hand) a strong opinion of your owne judgement, and enforce the poet to take pity of your weakenesse, and by some dedicated sonnet to bring you into a better paradise, onely to stop your mouth.

"If you can (either for love or money) provide your selfe a lodging by the water side: for above the conveniencie it brings to shun shoulder-clapping, and to ship away your cockatrice betimes in the morning, it addes a kind of state unto you, to be carried from thence to the staires of your play-house: hate a sculler (remember that) worse then to be acquainted with one ath' scullery. No, your oares are your onely sea-crabs, boord them, and take heed you never go twice together with one paire: often shifting is a great credit to gentlemen: and that dividing of your fare wil make the poore watersnaks be ready to pul you in peeces to enjoy your custome. No matter whether upon landing you have money or no; you may swim in twentie of their boates over the river upon *ticket*; mary, when silver comes in, remember to pay trebble their fare, and it will make your flounder-catchers to send more thankes after you, when you doe not draw, then when you doe: for they know, it will be their owne another daie.

"Before the play begins, fall to cardes; you may win or loose (as fencers doe in a prize) and beate one another by confederacie, yet share the money when you meete at supper: notwithstanding, to gul the raggamuffins that

stand a loofe gaping at you, throw the cards (having first torne four or five of them) round about the stage, just upon the third sound, as though you had lost: it skils not if the four knaves ly on their backs, and outface the audience, there's none such fooles as dare take exceptions at them, because ere the play go off, better knaves than they, will fall into the company.

"Now, Sir, if the writer be a fellow that hath either epigram'd you, or hath had a flirt at your mistris, or hath brought either your feather, or your red beard, or your little legs, &c. on the stage, you shall disgrace him worse then by tossing him in a blanket, or giving him the bastinado in a taverne, if in the middle of his play (bee it pastorall or comedy, morall or tragedie) you rise with a skreud and discontented face from your stoole, to be gone; no matter whether the scenes be good or no; the better they are, the worse do you distast them: and beeing on your feete, sneake not away like a coward, but salute all your gentle acquaintance that are spred either on the rushes or on stooles about you, and draw what troope you can from the stage after you: the *mimicks* are beholden to you for allowing them elbow roome: their poet cries perhaps, a pox go with you, but care not you for that; there's no musick without frets.

"Mary, if either the company, or indisposition of the weather binde you to sit it out, my counsell is then that you turne plaine ape: take up a rush and tickle the earnest eares of your fellow gallants, to make other fooles fall a laughing: mewe at the passionate speeches, blare at merrie, finde fault with the musicke, whewe at the children's action, whistle at the songs; and above all, curse the sharers, that whereas the same day you had bestowed forty shillings on an embroidered felt and feather (Scotch fashion) for your mistres in the court, or your punck in the cittie, within two hours after, you encounter with the very same block on the stage, when the haberdasher swore to you the impression was extant but that morning.

"To conclude, hoord up the finest play-scrapes you can get, upon which your leane wit may most savourly feede, for want of other stufte, when the Arcadian and Euphuis'd gentlewomen have their tongues sharpened to set upon you: that qualitie (next to your shittlecocke) is the only furniture to a courtier that's but a new beginner, and is

but in his A B C of complement. The next places that are fil'd after the play-houses bee emptied, are (or ought to be) tavernes: into a taverne then let us next march, where the braines of one hogshead must be beaten out to make up another."*

* The following *pretty picture* of THE STAGE is given in Gayton's Notes on Don Quixote, 1654, p. 271:

"Men came not to study at a play-house, but love such expressions and passages, which with ease insinuate themselves into their capacities. Lingua, that learned comedy of the contention betwixt the five senses for superiority, is not to be prostituted to the common stage, but is only proper for an Academy; to them bring Jack Drum's Entertainment, Green's Tu Quoque, the Devil of Edmonton, and the like; or if it be on holy dayes, when saylers, water-men, shoo-makers, butchers, and apprentices, are at leisure, then it is good policy to amaze those violent spirits with some tearing Tragedy full of fights and skirmishes: as the Guelphs and Guiblines, Greeks and Trojans, or the three London Apprentices; which commonly ends in six acts, the spectators frequently mounting the stage, and making a more bloody catastrophe amongst themselves, than the players did. I have known upon one of these *festivals*, but especially at Shrove-tide, where the players have been appointed, notwithstanding their bills to the contrary, to act what the major part of the company had a mind to; sometimes Tamerlane, sometimes Jugurth, sometimes The Jew of Malta; and sometimes parts of all these, and at last none of the three taking, they were forc'd to undresse and put off their tragick habits, and conclude the day with the Merry Milk-maides. And unlesse this were done, and the popular humour satisfied, as sometimes it so fortun'd, that the players were refractory; the benches, the tiles, the laths, the stones, oranges, apples, nuts, flew about most liberally; and, as there were mechanicks of all professions, who fell every one to his owne trade, and dissolved a house in an instant, and made a ruine of a stately fabrick. It was not then the most mimicall nor fighting man, Fowler, nor Andrew Cane, could pacifie: Prologues nor Epilogues would prevaile; the devill and the fool were quite out of favour. Nothing but noise and tumult fils the house, untill a cogg take 'um, and then to the bawdy houses and reforme them; and instantly to the Bank's Side, where the poor bears must conclude the riot, and fight twenty dogs at a time beside the butchers, which sometimes fell into the service; this perform'd, and the horse and jack-an-apes for a jigge, they had sport enough that day for nothing." TODD.

I should have attempted on the present occasion to enumerate all other pamphlets, &c. from whence particulars relative to the conduct of our early theatres might be collected, but that Dr. Percy, in his first volume of the *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, (third edit. p. 128, &c.) has extracted such passages from them as tend to the illustration of this subject; to which he has added more accurate remarks than my experience in these matters would have enabled me to supply. STEEVENS.

P R E F A C E

TO

MR. M. MASON'S COMMENTS, &c.

1785.

NOT thoroughly satisfied with any of the former editions of Shakspeare, even that of Johnson, I had resolved to venture upon one of my own, and had actually collected materials for the purpose, when that* which is the subject of the following Observations, made its appearance; in which I found that a considerable part of the amendments and explanations I had intended to propose were anticipated by the labours and eccentric reading of Steevens, the ingenious researches of Malone, and the sagacity of Tyrwhitt. —I will fairly confess that I was somewhat mortified at this discovery, which compell'd me to relinquish a favourite pursuit, from whence I had vainly expected to derive some degree of credit in the literary world. This, however, was a secondary consideration; and my principal purpose will be answered to my wish, if the Comments, which I now submit to the publick shall, in any other hands, contribute materially to a more complete edition of our inimitable poet.

If we may judge from the advertisement prefixed to his Supplement, Malone seems to think that no other edition can hereafter be wanted; as in speaking of the last, he says, “The text of the author seems now to be finally settled, the great abilities and unwearied researches of the editor having left little obscure or unexplained.”†

* Edit. 1778.

† As I was never vain enough to suppose the edit. 1778 was entitled to this encomium, I can find no difficulty in allowing that it has been properly recalled by the gentleman who bestowed it. See his Preface; and his Letter to the Reverend Dr. Farmer, p. 7 and 8. STEEVENS.

Though I cannot subscribe to this opinion of Malone, with respect to the final adjustment of the text, I shall willingly join in his encomium on the editor, who deserves the applause and gratitude of the publick, not only for his industry and abilities, but also for the zeal with which he has prosecuted the object he had in view, which prompted him, not only to the wearisome task of collation, but also to engage in a peculiar course of reading, neither pleasing nor profitable for any other purpose.

But I will venture to assert, that his merit is more conspicuous in the comments than the text; in the regulation of which he seems to have acted rather from caprice, than any settled principle; admitting alterations, in some passages, on very insufficient authority, indeed, whilst in others he has retained the antient readings, though evidently corrupt, in preference to amendments as evidently just; and it frequently happens, that after pointing out to us the true reading, he adheres to that which he himself has proved to be false. Had he regulated the text in every place according to his own judgment, Malone's observation would have been nearer to the truth; but as it now stands, the last edition has no signal advantage, that I can perceive, over that of Johnson, in point of correctness.

But the object that Steevens had most at heart, was the illustration of Shakspeare, in which it must be owned he has clearly surpassed all the former editors. If without his abilities, application, or reading, I have happened to succeed in explaining some passages, which he misapprehended, or in suggesting amendments that escaped his sagacity, it is owing merely to the minute attention with which I have studied every line of these plays, whilst the other commentators, I will not except even Steevens himself, have too generally confined their observation and ingenuity to those litigated passages, which have been handed down to them by former editors, as requiring either amendment or explanation, and have suffered many others to pass unheeded, that in truth, were equally erroneous or obscure. It may possibly be thought that I have gone too far in the other extreme, in pointing out trifling mistakes in the printing, which every reader perceives to be such, and amends as he reads; but where correctness is the object, no inaccuracy, however immaterial, should escape unnoticed.—

—There is perhaps no species of publication whatever, more likely to produce diversity of opinion than verbal criticisms; for as there is no certain criterion of truth, no established principle by which we can decide whether they be justly founded or not, every reader is left to his own imagination, on which will depend his censure or applause. I have not therefore the vanity to hope that all these observations will be generally approved of; some of them, I confess, are not thoroughly satisfactory even to myself, and are hazarded, rather than relied on:—But there are others which I offer with some degree of confidence, and I flatter myself that they will meet, upon the whole, with a favourable reception from the admirers of Shakspeare, as tending to elucidate a number of passages which have hitherto been misprinted or misunderstood.

In forming these comments, I have confined myself solely to the particular edition which is the object of them, without comparing it with any other, even with that of Johnson: not doubting but the editors had faithfully stated the various readings of the first editions, I resolved to avoid the labour of collating; but had I been inclined to undertake that task, it would not have been in my power, as few, if any, of the ancient copies can be had in the country where I reside.

I have selected from the Supplement, *Pericles*, *Prince of Tyre*, because it is supposed by some of the commentators to have been the work of Shakspeare, and is at least as faulty as any of the rest. The remainder of the plays which Malone has published are * neither, in my opinion, the production of our poet, or sufficiently incorrect to require any comment. M. MASON.

* Mr. Mason alludes to a supplement published by Mr. Malone in 1780, to Mr. Steevens's edition of 1778. These plays were not given as the genuine productions of Shakspeare, but as having been ascribed to him, and therefore worthy of republication, as a curiosity. BOSWELL.

MR. REED'S
ADVERTISEMENT,

BEFORE THE THIRD EDITION, 1785.

THE works of Shakspeare, during the last twenty years, have been the objects of publick attention more than at any former period. In that time the various editions of his performances have been examined, his obscurities illuminated, his defects pointed out, and his beauties displayed, so fully, so accurately, and in so satisfactory a manner, that it might reasonably be presumed little would remain to be done by either new editors or new commentators : yet, though the diligence and sagacity of those gentlemen who contributed towards the last edition of this author may seem to have almost exhausted the subject, the same train of enquiry has brought to light new discoveries, and accident will probably continue to produce further illustrations, which may render some alterations necessary in every succeeding republication.

Since the last edition of this work in 1778, the zeal for elucidating Shakspeare, which appeared in most of the gentlemen whose names are affixed to the notes, has suffered little abatement. The same persevering spirit of enquiry has continued to exert itself, and the same laborious search into the literature, the manners, and the customs of the times, which was formerly so successfully employed, has remained undiminished. By these aids some new information has been obtained, and some new materials collected. From the assistance of such writers even Shakspeare will receive no discredit.

When the very great and various talents of the last editor, particularly for this work, are considered, it will occasion much regret to find, that having superintended

two editions of his favourite author through the press, he has at length declined the laborious office, and committed the care of the present edition to one who laments with the rest of the world the secession of his predecessor; being conscious, as well of his own inferiority, as of the injury the publication will sustain by the change.

As some alterations have been made in the present edition, it may be thought necessary to point them out. These are of two kinds, additions and omissions. The additions are such as have been supplied by the last editor, and the principal of the living commentators. To mention these assistances, is sufficient to excite expectation; but to speak any thing in their praise will be superfluous to those who are acquainted with their former labours. Some remarks are also added from new commentators, and some notices extracted from books which have been published in the course of a few years past.

Of the omissions, the most important are some notes, which have been demonstrated to be ill founded, and some which were supposed to add to the size of the volumes without increasing their value. It may probably have happened that a few are rejected which ought to have been retained; and in that case the present editor, who has been the occasion of their removal, will feel some concern from the injustice of his proceeding. He is, however, inclined to believe, that what he has omitted will be pardoned by the reader; and that the liberty which he has taken will not be thought to have been licentiously indulged. At all events, that the censure may fall where it ought, he desires it to be understood that no person is answerable for any of these innovations but himself.

It has been observed by the last editor, that the multitude of instances which have been produced to exemplify particular words, and explain obsolete customs, may, when the point is once known to be established, be diminished by any future editor, and, in conformity to this opinion, several quotations, which were heretofore properly introduced, are now curtailed. Were an apology required on this occasion, the present editor might shelter himself under the authority of Prior, who long ago has said,

“ That when one's proofs are aptly chosen,

“ Four are as valid as four dozen.”

The present editor thinks it unnecessary to say any thing of his own share in the work, except that he undertook it in consequence of an application which was too flattering and too honourable to him to decline. He mentions this only to have it known that he did not intrude himself into the situation. He is not insensible, that the task would have been better executed by many other gentlemen, and particularly by some whose names appear to the notes. He has added but little to the bulk of the volumes from his own observations, having, upon every occasion, rather chosen to avoid a note, than to court the opportunity of inserting one. The liberty he has taken of omitting some remarks, he is confident, has been exercised without prejudice and without partiality; and therefore, trusting to the candour and indulgence of the publick, will forbear to detain them any longer from the entertainment they may receive from the greatest poet of this or any other nation. REED.

Nov. 10, 1785.

MR. MALONE'S
P R E F A C E.

[1790.]

IN the following work, the labour of eight years, I have endeavoured, with unceasing solicitude, to give a faithful and correct edition of the plays and poems of Shakspeare. Whatever imperfection or errors therefore may be found in it, (and what work of so great a length and difficulty was ever free from error or imperfection?) will, I trust, be imputed to any other cause than want of zeal for the due execution of the task which I ventured to undertake.

The difficulties to be encountered by an editor of the works of Shakspeare, have been so frequently stated, and are so generally acknowledged, that it may seem unnecessary to conciliate the publick favour by this plea: but as these, in my opinion, have in some particulars been over-rated, and in others not sufficiently insisted on, and as the true state of the ancient copies of this poet's writings has never been laid before the publick, I shall consider the subject as if it had not been already discussed by preceding editors.

In the year 1756 Dr. Johnson published the following excellent scheme of a new edition of Shakspeare's dramatick pieces, which he completed in 1765:

"When the works of Shakspeare are, after so many editions, again offered to the publick, it will doubtless be enquired, why Shakspeare stands in more need of critical assistance than any other of the English writers, and what are the deficiencies of the late attempts, which another editor may hope to supply?

"The business of him that republishes an ancient book is, to correct what is corrupt, and to explain what is ob-

scure. To have a text corrupt in many places, and in many doubtful, is, among the authors that have written since the use of types, almost peculiar to Shakspeare. Most writers, by publishing their own works, prevent all various readings, and preclude all conjectural criticism. Books indeed are sometimes published after the death of him who produced them, but they are better secured from corruptions than these unfortunate compositions. They subsist in a single copy, written or revised by the author; and the faults of the printed volume can be only faults of one descent.

“ But of the works of Shakspeare the condition has been far different: he sold them, not to be printed, but to be played. They were immediately copied for the actors, and multiplied by transcript after transcript, vitiated by the blunders of the penman, or changed by the affectation of the player; perhaps enlarged to introduce a jest, or mutilated to shorten the representation; and printed at last without the concurrence of the author, without the consent of the proprietor, from compilations made by chance or by stealth out of the separate parts written for the theatre: and thus thrust into the world surreptitiously and hastily, they suffered another depravation from the ignorance and negligence of the printers, as every man who knows the state of the press in that age will readily conceive.

“ It is not easy for invention to bring together so many causes concurring to vitiate a text. No other author ever gave up his works to fortune and time with so little care; no books could be left in hands so likely to injure them, as plays frequently acted, yet continued in manuscript: no other transcribers were likely to be so little qualified for their task, as those who copied for the stage, at a time when the lower ranks of the people were universally illiterate: no other editions were made from fragments so minutely broken, and so fortuitously re-united; and in no other age was the art of printing in such unskilful hands.

“ With the causes of corruption that make the revisal of Shakspeare's dramattick pieces necessary, may be enumerated the causes of obscurity, which may be partly imputed to his age, and partly to himself.

“ When a writer outlives his contemporaries, and remains almost the only unforgotten name of a distant time, he is necessarily obscure. Every age has its modes of

speech, and its cast of thought; which, though easily explained when there are many books to be compared with each other, become sometimes unintelligible, and always difficult, when there are no parallel passages that may conduce to their illustration. Shakspeare is the first considerable author of sublime or familiar dialogue in our language. Of the books which he read, and from which he formed his style, some perhaps have perished, and the rest are neglected. His imitations are therefore unnoted, his allusions are undiscovered, and many beauties, both of pleasantry and greatness, are lost with the objects to which they were united, as the figures vanish when the canvass has decayed.

“It is the great excellence of Shakspeare, that he drew his scenes from nature, and from life. He copied the manners of the world then passing before him, and has more allusions than other poets to the traditions and superstitions of the vulgar; which must therefore be traced before he can be understood.

“He wrote at a time when our poetical language was yet unformed, when the meaning of our phrases was yet in fluctuation, when words were adopted at pleasure from the neighbouring languages, and while the Saxon was still visibly mingled in our diction. The reader is therefore embarrassed at once with dead and with foreign languages, with obsoleteness and innovation. In that age, as in all others, fashion produced phraseology, which succeeding fashion swept away before its meaning was generally known, or sufficiently authorized: and in that age, above all others, experiments were made upon our language, which distorted its combinations, and disturbed its uniformity.

“If Shakspeare has difficulties above other writers, it is to be imputed to the nature of his work, which required the use of the common colloquial language, and consequently admitted many phrases allusive, elliptical, and proverbial, such as we speak and hear every hour, without observing them; and of which, being now familiar, we do not suspect that they can ever grow uncouth, or that, being now obvious, they can ever seem remote.

“These are the principal causes of the obscurity of Shakspeare; to which may be added that fulness of idea, which might sometimes load his words with more sentiment than they could conveniently convey, and that

rapidity of imagination which might hurry him to a second thought before he had fully explained the first. But my opinion is, that very few of his lines were difficult to his audience, and that he used such expressions as were then common, though the paucity of contemporary writers makes them now seem peculiar.

“ Authors are often praised for improvement, or blamed for innovation, with very little justice, by those who read few other books of the same age. Addison himself has been so unsuccessful in enumerating the words with which Milton has enriched our language, as perhaps not to have named one of which Milton was the author: and Bentley has yet more unhappily praised him as the introducer of those elisions into English poetry, which had been used from the first essays of versification among us, and which Milton was indeed the last that practised.

“ Another impediment, not the least vexatious to the commentator, is the exactness with which Shakspeare followed his author. Instead of dilating his thoughts into generalities, and expressing incidents with poetical latitude, he often combines circumstances unnecessary to his main design, only because he happened to find them together. Such passages can be illustrated only by him who has read the same story in the very book which Shakspeare consulted.

“ He that undertakes an edition of Shakspeare, has all these difficulties to encounter, and all these obstructions to remove.

“ The corruptions of the text will be corrected by a careful collation of the oldest copies, by which it is hoped that many restorations may yet be made; at least it will be necessary to collect and note the variations as materials for future criticks, for it very often happens that a wrong reading has affinity to the right.

“ In this part all the present editions are apparently and intentionally defective. The criticks did not so much as wish to facilitate the labour of those that followed them. The same books are still to be compared; the work that has been done, is to be done again, and no single edition will supply the reader with a text on which he can rely as the best copy of the works of Shakspeare

“ The edition now proposed will at least have this advantage over others. It will exhibit all the observable varieties of all the copies that can be found; that, if the

reader is not satisfied with the editor's determination, he may have the means of choosing better for himself.

"Where all the books are evidently vitiated, and collation can give no assistance, then begins the task of critical sagacity: and some changes may well be admitted in a text never settled by the author, and so long exposed to caprice and ignorance. But nothing shall be imposed, as in the Oxford edition, without notice of the alteration; nor shall conjecture be wantonly or unnecessarily indulged.

"It has been long found, that very specious emendations do not equally strike all minds with conviction, nor even the same mind at different times; and therefore, though perhaps many alterations may be proposed as eligible, very few will be obtruded as certain. In a language so ungrammatical as the English, and so licentious as that of Shakspeare, emendatory criticism is always hazardous; nor can it be allowed to any man who is not particularly versed in the writings of that age, and particularly studious of his author's diction. There is danger lest peculiarities should be mistaken for corruptions, and passages rejected as unintelligible, which a narrow mind happens not to understand.

"All the former criticks have been so much employed on the correction of the text, that they have not sufficiently attended to the elucidation of passages obscured by accident or time. The editor will endeavour to read the books which the author read, to trace his knowledge to its source, and compare his copies with the originals. If in this part of his design he hopes to attain any degree of superiority to his predecessors, it must be considered, that he has the advantage of their labours; that part of the work being already done, more care is naturally bestowed on the other part; and that, to declare the truth, Mr. Rowe and Mr. Pope were very ignorant of the ancient English literature; Dr. Warburton was detained by more important studies; and Mr. Theobald, if fame be just to his memory, considered learning only as an instrument of gain, and made no further inquiry after his author's meaning, when once he had notes sufficient to embellish his page with the expected decorations.

"With regard to obsolete or peculiar diction, the editor may perhaps claim some degree of confidence, having had

more motives to consider the whole extent of our language than any other man from its first formation. He hopes, that, by comparing the works of Shakspeare with those of writers who lived at the same time, immediately preceded, or immediately followed him, he shall be able to ascertain his ambiguities, disentangle his intricacies, and recover the meaning of words now lost in the darkness of antiquity.

“When therefore any obscurity arises from an allusion to some other book, the passage will be quoted. When the diction is entangled, it will be cleared by a paraphrase or interpretation. When the sense is broken by the suppression of part of the sentiment in pleasantry or passion, the connection will be supplied. When any forgotten custom is hinted, care will be taken to retrieve and explain it. The meaning assigned to doubtful words will be supported by the authorities of other writers, or by parallel passages of Shakspeare himself.

“The observation of faults and beauties is one of the duties of an annotator, which some of Shakspeare’s editors have attempted, and some have neglected. For this part of his task, and for this only, was Mr. Pope eminently and indisputably qualified: nor has Dr. Warburton followed him with less diligence or less success. But I never observed that mankind was much delighted or improved by their asterisks, commas, or double commas; of which the only effect is, that they preclude the pleasure of judging for ourselves; teach the young and ignorant to decide without principles; defeat curiosity and discernment by leaving them less to discover; and, at last, show the opinion of the critick, without the reasons on which it was founded, and without affording any light by which it may be examined.

“The editor, though he may less delight his own vanity, will probably please his reader more, by supposing him equally able with himself to judge of beauties and faults, which require no previous acquisition of remote knowledge. A description of the obvious scenes of nature, a representation of general life, a sentiment of reflection or experience, a deduction of conclusive argument, a forcible eruption of effervescent passion, are to be considered as proportionate to common apprehension, unassisted by critical officiousness; since to conceive them, nothing

more is requisite than acquaintance with the general state of the world, and those faculties which he must always bring with him who would read Shakspeare.

“But when the beauty arises from some adaptation of the sentiment to customs worn out of use, to opinions not universally prevalent, or to any accidental or minute particularity, which cannot be supplied by common understanding, or common observation, it is the duty of a commentator to lend his assistance.

“The notice of beauties and faults thus limited will make no distinct part of the design, being reducible to the explanation of obscure passages.

“The editor does not however intend to preclude himself from the comparison of Shakspeare's sentiments or expression with those of ancient or modern authors, or from the display of any beauty not obvious to the students of poetry; for as he hopes to leave his author better understood, he wishes likewise to procure him more rational approbation.

“The former editors have affected to slight their predecessors: but in this edition all that is valuable will be adopted from every commentator, that posterity may consider it as including all the rest, and exhibit whatever is hitherto known of the great father of the English drama.”

Though Dr. Johnson has here pointed out with his usual perspicuity and vigour, the true course to be taken by an editor of Shakspeare, some of the positions which he has laid down may be controverted, and some are indubitably not true. It is not true that the plays of this author were more incorrectly printed than those of any of his contemporaries: for in the plays of Marlowe, Marston, Fletcher, Massinger, and others, as many errors may be found. It is not true that the art of printing was in no other age in so unskilful hands. Nor is it true, in the latitude in which it is stated, that “these plays were printed from compilations made by chance or by stealth out of the separate parts written for the theatre:” two only of all his dramas, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *King Henry V.* appear to have been thus thrust into the world, and of the former it is yet a doubt whether it is a first sketch or an imperfect copy. I do not believe that words were then adopted at pleasure from the neighbouring languages, or that an antiquated diction was then employed by any poet but Spenser. That the obscurities of our author, to whatever cause they

may be referred, do not arise from the paucity of contemporary writers, the present edition may furnish indisputable evidence. And lastly, if it be true, that "very few of Shakspeare's lines were difficult to his audience, and that he used such expressions as were then common," (a position of which I have not the smallest doubt,) it cannot be true, that "his reader is embarrassed at once with dead and with foreign languages, with obsolescence and innovation."

When Mr. Pope first undertook the task of revising these plays, every anomaly of language, and every expression that was not understood at that time, were considered as errors or corruptions, and the text was altered, or amended, as it was called, at pleasure. The principal writers of the early part of this century seem never to have looked behind them, and to have considered their own era and their own phraseology as the standard of perfection: hence, from the time of Pope's edition, for above twenty years, to alter Shakspeare's text and to restore it, were considered as synonymous terms. During the last thirty years our principal employment has been to *restore*, in the true sense of the word; to eject the arbitrary and capricious innovations made by our predecessors from ignorance of the phraseology and customs of the age in which Shakspeare lived.

As on the one hand our poet's text has been described as more corrupt than it really is, so on the other, the labour required to investigate fugitive allusions, to explain and justify obsolete phraseology by parallel passages from contemporary authors, and to form a genuine text by a faithful collation of the original copies, has not perhaps had that notice to which it is entitled: for undoubtedly it is a laborious and a difficult task: and the due execution of this it is, which can alone entitle an editor of Shakspeare to the favour of the publick.

I have said that the comparative value of the various ancient copies of Shakspeare's plays has never been precisely ascertained. To prove this, it will be necessary to go into a long and minute discussion, for which, however, no apology is necessary: for though to explain and illustrate the writings of our poet is a principal duty of his editor, to ascertain his genuine text, to fix what is to be explained, is his first and immediate object: and till it be established which of the ancient copies is en-

titled to preference, we have no criterion by which the text can be ascertained.

Fifteen of Shakspeare's plays were printed in quarto antecedent to the first complete collection of his works, which was published by his fellow-comedians in 1623. These plays are, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *The Two Parts of King Henry IV.* *King Richard II.* *King Richard III.* *The Merchant of Venice*, *King Henry V.* *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *King Lear*, and *Othello*.

The players, when they mention these copies, represent them all as mutilated and imperfect; but this was merely thrown out to give an additional value to their own edition, and is not strictly true of any but two of the whole number; *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *King Henry V.*—With respect to the other thirteen copies, though undoubtedly they were all surreptitious, that is, stolen from the playhouse, and printed without the consent of the author or the proprietors, they *in general* are preferable to the exhibition of the same plays in the folio; for this plain reason, because, instead of printing these plays from a manuscript, the editors of the folio, to save labour, or from some other motive, printed the greater part of them from the very copies which they represented as maimed and imperfect, and frequently from a late, instead of the earliest, edition; in some instances with additions and alterations of their own. Thus therefore the first folio, as far as respects the plays above enumerated, labours under the disadvantage of being at least a second, and in some cases a third, edition of these quartos. I do not, however, mean to say, that many valuable corrections of passages undoubtedly corrupt in the quartos are not found in the folio copy; or that a single line of these plays should be printed by a careful editor without a minute examination, and collation of both copies; but those quartos were in general the basis on which the folio editors built, and are entitled to our particular attention and examination as *first* editions.

It is well known to those who are conversant with the business of the press, that, (unless when the author corrects and revises his own works,) as editions of books are multiplied, their errors are multiplied also; and that

consequently every such edition is more or less correct, as it approaches nearer to or is more distant from the first. A few instances of the gradual progress of corruption will fully evince the truth of this assertion.

In the original copy of King Richard II. 4to. 1597, Act II. Sc. II. are these lines :

“ You promis’d, when you parted with the king,
“ To lay aside *life-harming* heaviness.”

In a subsequent quarto, printed in 1608, instead of *life-harming* we find *half-harming*; which being perceived by the editor of the folio to be nonsense, he substituted, instead of it,—*self-harming* heaviness.

In the original copy of King Henry IV. P. I. printed in 1598, Act IV. Sc. IV. we find—

“ And what with Owen Glendower’s absence thence,
“ (Who with them was a *rated sinew* too,)” &c.

In the fourth quarto, printed in 1608, the article being omitted by the negligence of the compositor, and the line printed thus,—

“ Who with them was rated sinew too,”

the editor of the next quarto, (which was copied by the folio,) instead of examining the first edition, amended the error (leaving the metre still imperfect) by reading—

“ Who with them was *rated firmly* too.”

So, in the same play, Act I. Sc. III. instead of the reading of the earliest copy—

“ Why what a *candy* deal of courtesy—”

caudy being printed in the first folio instead of *candy*, by the accidental inversion of the letter *n*, the editor of the second folio corrected the error by substituting *gawdy**.

So, in the same play, Act III. Sc. I. instead of the reading of the earliest impression,

“ The frame and huge foundation of the earth—”

in the second and the subsequent quartos, the line by the negligence of the compositor was exhibited without the word *huge* :

“ The frame and foundation of the earth—”

* This is a mistake. The second folio merely adopted the misprint of the first. BOSWELL.

and the editor of the folio, finding the metre imperfect, supplied it by reading,

“ The frame and *the* foundation of the earth*.”

Another line in Act V. Sc. Ult. is thus exhibited in the quarto, 1598 :

“ But that the *earthy* and cold hand of death—”

Earth being printed instead of *earthy*, in the next and the subsequent quarto copies, the editor of the folio amended the line thus :

“ But that the *earth* and *the* cold hand of death—.”

Again, in the preceding scene, we find in the first copy,

“ I was not born a yielder, thou proud Scot—.”

instead of which, in the fifth quarto, 1613, we have—

“ I was not born *to yield*, thou proud Scot.”

This being the copy that was used by the editor of the folio, instead of examining the most ancient impression, he corrected the error according to his own fancy, and probably while the work was passing through the press, by reading—

“ I was not born *to yield*, thou *haughty* Scot.”

In *Romeo and Juliet*, Juliet says to her Nurse,

“ In faith, I am sorry that thou art not well.”

and this line in the first folio being corruptly exhibited—

“ In faith, I am sorry that thou art *so* well.”

the editor of the second folio, to obtain some sense, printed—

“ In faith, I am sorry that thou art *so ill*.”

In the quarto copy of the same play, published in 1599, we find—

“ —————O happy dagger,

“ This is thy sheath; there rust, and let me die.”

* Here again both folios adopt the error of their predecessors, but do not insert the word *the*. BOSWELL.

In the next quarto, 1609, the last line is thus represented:

“ ‘Tis is thy sheath,” &c.

The editor of the folio, seeing that this was manifestly wrong, absurdly corrected the error thus:

“ ‘Tis *in* thy sheath: there rust and let me die.”

Again, in the same play, quarto, 1599, *mishav'd* being corruptly printed for *misbehav'd*,—

“ But like a *mishav'd* and sullen wench—”

the editor of the first folio, to obtain something like sense, reads—

“ But like a *misshap'd* and sullen wench—.”

and instead of this, the editor of the second folio, for the sake of metre, gives us—

“ But like a *misshap'd* and a sullen wench—.”

Again, in the first scene of King Richard III. quarto 1597, we find this line:

“ That *tempers* him to this extremity.”

In the next quarto, and all subsequent, *tempts* is corruptly printed instead of *tempers*. The line then wanting a syllable, the editor of the folio printed it thus:

“ That *tempts* him to this *harsh* extremity.”

Not to weary my reader, I shall add but two more instances, from Romeo and Juliet:

“ Away to heaven, respective lenity,

“ And *fire-ey'd* fury be my conduct now!”

says Romeo, when provoked by the appearance of his rival. Instead of this, which is the reading of the quarto 1597, the line, in the quarto 1599, is thus corruptly exhibited:

“ And fire *end* fury be my conduct now!”

In the subsequent quarto copy *and* was substituted for *end*; and accordingly in the folio the poet's fine imagery is entirely lost, and Romeo exclaims,

“ And *fire and fury* be my conduct now!”

The other instance in the same play is not less remarkable. In the quarto 1599, the Friar, addressing Romeo, is made to say,

“Thou *puts up* thy fortune, and thy love.”

The editor of the folio perceiving here a gross corruption, substituted these words :

“Thou *puttest up* thy fortune, and thy love ;”

not perceiving that *up* was a misprint for *upon*, and *puts* for *pouts*, (which according to the ancient mode was written instead of *powl'st*,) as he would have found by looking into another copy without a date, and as he might have conjectured from the corresponding line in the original play printed in 1597, had he ever examined it :

“Thou *frown'st upon* thy fate, that smiles on thee.”

So little known indeed was the value of the early impressions of books, (not revised or corrected by their authors,) that King Charles the First, though a great admirer of our poet, was contented with the *second* folio edition of his plays, unconscious of the numerous misrepresentations and interpolations by which every page of that copy is disfigured ; and in a volume of the quarto plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, which formerly belonged to that king, and is now in my collection, I did not find a single first impression. In like manner, Sir William D'Avenant, when he made his alteration of the play of Macbeth, appears to have used the third folio printed in 1664.*

The various readings found in the different impressions of the quarto copies are frequently mentioned by the late editors : it is obvious from what has been already stated, that the first edition of each play is alone of any authority,† and accordingly to no other have I paid any attention. All the variations in the subsequent quartos

* In that copy *anoint* being corruptly printed instead of *aroint*,

“*Anoint* thee, witch, the rump-fed ronyon cries.”

the error was implicitly adopted by D'Avenant.

† Except only in the instance of *Romeo and Juliet*, where the first copy, printed in 1597, appears to be an imperfect sketch, and therefore cannot be entirely relied on. Yet even this furnishes many valuable corrections of the more perfect copy of that tragedy in its present state, printed in 1599.

were made by accident or caprice. Where, however, there are two editions printed in the same year, or an undated copy, it is necessary to examine each of them, because which of them was first, cannot be ascertained; and being each printed from a manuscript, they carry with them a degree of authority to which a re-impression cannot be entitled. Of the tragedy of King Lear there are no less than three copies, varying from each other, printed for the same bookseller, and in the same year.

Of all the plays of which there are no quarto copies extant, the first folio, printed in 1623, is the only authentick edition.

An opinion has been entertained by some that the second impression of that book, published in 1632, has a similar claim to authenticity. "Whoever has any of the folios, (says Dr. Johnson,) has all, excepting those diversities which mere reiteration of editions will produce. I collated them all at the beginning, but afterwards used only the first, from which (he afterwards adds,) the subsequent folios never differ but by accident or negligence." Mr. Steevens, however, does not subscribe to this opinion. "The edition of 1632, (says that gentleman) is not without value; for though it be in some places more incorrectly printed than the preceding one, it has likewise the advantage of various readings, which are not merely such as reiteration of copies will naturally produce."

What Dr. Johnson has stated, is not quite accurate. The second folio does indeed very frequently differ from the first by negligence or chance; but much more frequently by the editor's profound ignorance of our poet's phraseology and metre, in consequence of which there is scarce a page of the book which is not disfigured by the capricious alterations introduced by the person to whom the care of that impression was entrusted. This person in fact, whoever he was, and Mr. Pope, were the two great corrupters of our poet's text; and I have no doubt that if the arbitrary alterations introduced by these two editors were numbered, in the plays of which no quarto copies are extant, they would greatly exceed all the corruptions and errors of the press in the original and only authentick copy of those plays. Though my judgment on this subject has been formed after a very careful examination, I cannot expect that it should be received

on my mere assertion: and therefore it is necessary to substantiate it by proof. This cannot be effected but by a long, minute, and what I am afraid will appear to many, an uninteresting disquisition: but let it still be remembered that to ascertain the genuine text of these plays is an object of great importance.

On a revision of the second folio printed in 1632, it will be found, that the editor of that book was entirely ignorant of our poet's phraseology and metre, and that various alterations were made by him, in consequence of that ignorance, which rendered his edition of no value whatsoever.

I. His ignorance of Shakspeare's phraseology is proved by the following among many other instances.

He did not know that the double negative was the customary and authorized language of the age of Queen Elizabeth, and therefore, instead of—

“ Nor to her bed *no* homage do I owe.”

Comedy of Errors, Act III. Sc. II.

he printed—

“ Nor to her bed *a* homage do I owe.”

So, in *As You Like It*, Act II. Sc. IV. instead of—“ I can *not* go no further,” he printed—“ I can go no further.”

In much *Ado about Nothing*, Act III. Sc. I. Hero, speaking of Beatrice, says,

“ ——— there will she hide her,

“ *To listen our propose.*”

for which the second folio substitutes—

“ ——— there will she hide her,

“ *To listen to our purpose.*”

Again, in *The Winter's Tale*, Act I. Sc. II.:

“ Thou dost make possible, things not so held.”

The plain meaning is, thou dost make those things possible, which are held to be impossible. But the editor of the second folio, not understanding the line, reads—

“ Thou dost make possible things not *to be* so held;”

i. e. thou dost make those things to be esteemed impossible, which are possible: the very reverse of what the poet meant.

In the same play is this line :

“ I am appointed *him* to murder you.”

Here the editor of the second folio, not being conversant with Shakspeare's irregular language, reads—

“ I *appointed him* to murder you.”

Again, in Macbeth :

“ This diamond he greets your wife withal,

“ By the name of most kind hostess ; and *shut up*

“ In measureless content.”

Not knowing that *shut up* meant *concluded*, the editor of the second folio reads—

“ ——— and shut *it up* [i. e. the diamond]

“ In measureless content.”

In the same play the word *lated*, (“ Now spurs the '*lated* traveller—”) not being understood, is changed to *latest*, and *Colmes-Inch* to *Colmes-hill*.

Again, *ibidem* : when Macbeth says, “ Hang those that talk of fear,” it is evident that these words are not a wish or imprecation, but an injunction to hang all the cowards in Scotland. The editor of the second folio, however, considering the passage in the former light, reads :

“ Hang them that *stand in* fear.”

From the same ignorance,

“ And all our yesterdays have lighted fools

“ The way to *dusty* death.”

is changed to—

“ And all our yesterdays have lighted fools

“ The way to *study* death.”

In King Richard II. Bolingbroke says,

“ And I must find that title in your *tongue*,” &c.

i. e. you must address me by that title. But this not being understood, *town* is in the second folio substituted for *tongue*.

The double comparative is common in the plays of Shakspeare. Yet, instead of

“ ——— I'll give my reasons

“ *More worthier* than their voices.”

Coriolanus, Act III. Sc. I. First Folio.

we have in the second copy,

“ More *worthy* than their voices.”

So, in *Othello*, Act I. Sc. V.—“ opinion, a sovereign mistress of effects, throws a more *safer* voice on you,”—is changed in the second folio, to—“ opinion, &c. throws a more *safe* voice on you.”

Again, in *Hamlet*, Act III. Sc. II. instead of—“ your wisdom should show itself more *richer*, to signify this to the doctor;” we find in the copy of 1632, “ ——your wisdom should show itself more *rich*,” &c.

In *The Winter's Tale*, the word *vast* not being understood,

“ —— they shook hands as over a *vast*.” First Folio.
we find in the second copy, “ —as over a *vast sea*.”

In *King John*, Act V. Sc. V. first folio, are these lines :

“ —— The English lords

“ By his persuasion are *again* fallen off.”

The editor of the second folio, thinking, I suppose, that as these lords had not *before* deserted the *French* king, it was improper to say that they had *again* fallen off;” substituted “ —are *at last* fallen off;” not perceiving that the meaning is, that these lords had gone back again to their own countrymen, whom they had before deserted.

In *King Henry VIII.* Act II. Sc. II. Norfolk, speaking of Wolsey, says, “ I'll venture one *have* at him.” This being misunderstood, is changed in the second copy to—“ I'll venture one *heave* at him.”

Julius Cæsar likewise furnishes various specimens of his ignorance of Shakspeare's language. The phrase, to *bear hard*, not being understood, instead of—

“ Caius Ligarius both *bear* Cæsar *hard*.” First Folio.
we find in the second copy,

“ Caius Ligarius doth *bear* Cæsar *hatred*.”

and from the same cause the words *dank*, *blest*, and *hurtled*, are dismissed from the text, and more familiar words substituted in their room.*

* “ To walk unbraced, and suck up the humours

“ Of the *dank* morning.” First Folio.

“ Of the *dark* morning.” Second Folio.

In like manner in the third Act of *Coriolanus*, Sc. II. the ancient verb to *owe*, i. e. to possess, is discarded by this editor, and *own* substituted in its place.

In Antony and Cleopatra, we find in the original copy these lines :

“ ——— I say again, thy spirit
 “ Is all afraid to govern thee near him,
 “ But he *away*, 'tis noble.”

Instead of restoring the true word *away*, which was thus corruptly exhibited, the editor of the second folio, without any regard to the context, altered another part of the line, and absurdly printed—“ But he *away* is noble.”

In the same play, Act I. Sc. III. Cleopatra says to Charmian—“ *Quick* and return ;” for which the editor of the second folio, not knowing that *quick* was either used adverbially, or elliptically for *Be quick*, substitutes—“ *Quickly*, and return.”

In Timon of Athens, are these lines :

“ And that unaptness made your minister
 “ Thus to excuse yourself.”

i. e. and made that unaptness your minister to excuse yourself ; or, in other words, availed yourself of that unaptness as an excuse for your own conduct. The words being inverted and put out of their natural order, the editor of the second folio supposed that *unaptness*, being placed first, must be the nominative case, and therefore reads—

“ And that unaptness made *you* minister,
 “ Thus to excuse yourself.”

In that play, from the same ignorance, instead of Timon's exhortation to the thieves, to kill as well as rob. —“ Take wealth and *lives* together,” we find in the second copy, “ Take wealth, and *live* together. And with equal ignorance and licentiousness this editor altered the epitaph on Timon, to render it what he thought metrical, by leaving out various words. In the original edition it appears as it does in Plutarch, and therefore we may be certain

“ We are *blest* that Rome is rid of him.” First Folio.
 “ We are *glad* that Rome is rid of him.” Second Folio.
 “ The noise of battle *hurtled* in the air.” First Folio.
 “ The noise of battle *hurried* in the air.” Second Folio.

that the variations in the second copy were here, as in other places, all arbitrary and capricious.

Again, in the same play, we have—

“ *I defil'd land.*”

and—

“ *O, my good lord, the world is but a word,*” &c.

The editor not understanding either of these passages, and supposing that *I* in the first of them was used as a personal pronoun, (whereas it stands according to the usage of that time for the affirmative particle, *ay*,) reads in the first line,

“ *I defy land;*”

and exhibits the other line thus :

“ *O, my good lord, the world is but a world,*” &c.

Our author and the contemporary writers generally write *wars*, not *war*, &c. The editor of the second folio being unapprised of this, reads in Antony and Cleopatra, Act III. Sc. V : “ Cæsar having made use of him in the *war* against Pompey,”—instead of *wars*, the reading of the original copy.

The seventh scene of the fourth act of this play concludes with these words : “ Despatch.—Enobarbus !” Antony, who is the speaker, desires his attendant *Eros* to despatch, and then pronounces the name *Enobarbus*, who had recently deserted him, and whose loss he here laments. But there being no person on the scene but *Eros*, and the point being inadvertently omitted after the word *dispatch*, the editor of the second folio supposed that *Enobarbus* must have been an error of the press, and therefore reads :

“ *Dispatch, Eros.*”

In Troilus and Cressida, Cressida says,

“ Things won are done; *joy's soul* lies in the doing.”

i. e. the *soul of joy* lies, &c. So, “ *love's visible soul*,” and “ *my soul of counsel* ;” expressions likewise used by Shakspeare. Here also the editor of the second folio exhibits equal ignorance of his author ; for instead of this eminently beautiful expression, he has given us—

“ Things won are done ; *the soul's joy* lies in doing.”

In King Richard III. Ratcliff, addressing the lords at Pomfret, says,

“ Make haste, the hour of death is *expiate*.”

for which the editor of the second folio, alike ignorant of the poet's language and metre, has substituted,

“ Make haste, the hour of death is *now expir'd*.”

So, in Romeo and Juliet :

“ The earth hath swallow'd all my hopes but she.”

The word *The* being accidentally omitted in the first folio, the editor of the second supplied the defect by reading—

“ Earth hath *up* swallow'd all my hopes but she.”

Again, in the same play ; “ I'll lay fourteen of my teeth, and yet, to my *teen* be it spoken, I have but four :” not understanding the word *teen*, he substituted *teeth* instead of it.

Again, *ibidem* :

“ Prick'd from the lazy finger of a *maid*—”

Man being corruptly printed instead of *maid* in the first folio, 1623, the editor of the second, who never examined a single quarto copy,* corrected the error at random, by reading—

* That this editor never examined any of the quarto copies is proved by the following instances :

In Troilus and Cressida, we find in the first folio :

“ ——— the remainder viands

“ We do not throw in unrespective *same*,

“ Because we now are full.”

Finding this nonsense, he printed “ in unrespective *place*.” In the quarto he would have found the true word—*sieve*.

Again, in the same play, the following lines are thus corruptly exhibited :

“ That all the Greeks *begin to* worship Ajax ;

“ Since things in motion *begin to* catch the eye,

“ Than what not stirs.

the words—“ *begin to*,” being inadvertently repeated in the second line, by the compositor's eye glancing on the line above.

The editor of the second folio, instead of examining the quarto, where he would have found the true reading :

“ Since things in motion *sooner* catch the eye.”

" Prick'd from the lazy finger of a woman."

Again :

" Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say, ay :"

The word *me* being omitted in the first folio, the editor of the second capriciously supplied the metre thus :

thought only of amending the metre, and printed the line thus ,

" Since things in motion 'gin to catch the eye—"

leaving the passage nonsense, as he found it.

So, in Titus Andronicus :

" And let no *comfort* delight mine ear—"

being erroneously printed in the first folio, instead of " And let no *comforter*," &c. the editor of the second folio corrected the error according to his fancy, by reading—

" And let no *comfort else* delight mine ear."

So, in Love's Labour's Lost: " Old Mantuan, who understands thee not, *loves thee not*." The words in the Italick character being inadvertently omitted in the first folio, the editor of the second folio, instead of applying to the quarto to cure the defect, printed the passage just as he found it: and in like manner in the same play implicitly followed the error of the first folio, which has been already mentioned,—

" O, that your face were so full of *O's*—"

though the omission of the word *not*, which is found in the quarto, made the passage nonsense.

So, in Much Ado about Nothing :

" And I will break with her. Was't not to this end," &c. being printed instead of—

" And I will break with *her and with her father*,

" *And thou shalt have her*. Was't not to this end," &c. the error, which arose from the compositor's eye glancing from one line to the other, was implicitly adopted in the second folio.

Again, in A Midsummer-Night's Dream :

" *Ah me*, for aught that I could ever read,

" Could ever hear," &c.

the words *Ah me* being accidentally omitted in the first folio, instead of applying to the quarto for the true reading, he supplied the defect, according to his own fancy, thus :

" *Hermia*, for aught that I could ever read," &c.

Again, in The Merchant of Venice, he arbitrarily gives us—

" The ewe bleat for the lamb *when you behold*," instead of—

" *Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb*."

Innumerable other instances of the same kind might be produced.

"Dost thou love? O, I know thou wilt say, ay."

This expletive, we shall presently find, when I come to speak of the poet's metre, was his constant expedient in all difficulties.

In *Measure for Measure* he printed *ignominy*, instead of *ignomy*, the reading of the first folio, and the common language of the time. In the same play, from his ignorance of the constable's humour, he corrected his phraseology, and substituted *instant* for *distant*; ("—at that very distant time:") and in like manner he makes Dogberry, in *Much Ado about Nothing*, exhort the watch not to be *vigitant*, but *vigilant*.

Among the marks of love, Rosalind, in *As You Like It*, mentions "a beard neglected, which you have not;—but I pardon you for that; for, simply, your *having in* beard is a younger brother's revenue." Not understanding the meaning of the word *having*, this editor reads—"your having *no* beard," &c.

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Pyramus says,

"I *see* a voice; now will I to the chink,

"To spy an' I can *hear* my Thisby's face."

Of the humour of this passage he had not the least notion, for he printed, instead of it,

"I *hear* a voice; now will I to the chink,

"To spy an' I can *see* my Thisby's face."

In *The Merchant of Venice*, Act I. Sc. I. we find in the first folio,

"And out of doubt you do more wrong—"

which the editor of the second perceiving to be imperfect, he corrected at random thus:

"And out of doubt you do *to me* more wrong."

Had he consulted the original quarto, he would have found that the poet wrote—

"And out of doubt you do *me now* more wrong."

So, in the same play,—"*But of* mine, then yours," being corruptly printed instead of—"But *if* mine, then yours," this editor arbitrarily reads—"But *first* mine, then yours."

Again, *ibidem*:

"Or even as well use question with the wolf,

"The ewe bleat for the lamb."

the words "Why he hath made" being omitted in the first folio at the beginning of the second line, the second folio editor supplied the defect thus absurdly :

" Or even as well use question with the wolf,
 " The ewe bleat for the lamb *when you behold.*"

In Othello the word *snipe* being misprinted in the first folio,

" If I should time expend with such a *snipe.*"

the editor not knowing what to make of it, substituted *swain* instead of the corrupted word.

Again, in the same play,

" *For* of my heart those charms, thine eyes, are blotted."

being printed in the first folio instead of—" *Forth* of my heart," &c. which was the common language of the time, the editor of the second folio amended the error according to his fancy, by reading—

" *For off* my heart those charms, thine eyes, are blotted."

Again, in the same play, Act V. Sc. I. not understanding the phraseology of our author's time,

" Who's there ? Whose noise is this, that *cries on* murder ?"

he substituted—

" Whose noise is this, that *cries out* murder ?"

and in the first Act of the same play, not perceiving the force of an eminently beautiful epithet, for "*desarts idle*," he has given us "*desarts wild.*"

Again, in that tragedy we find—

" ———— what charms,
 " What conjuration, and what mighty magick,
 " (For such proceeding I am charg'd withal,)
 " I won his daughter."

that is, I won his daughter *with* ; and so the editor of the second folio reads, not knowing that this kind of elliptical expression frequently occurs in this author's works, as I have shown in a note on the last scene of Cymbeline, and in other places*.

* See vol. xiii. p. 228, n. 2.

In like manner he has corrupted the following passage in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* :

" So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,
 " Ere I will yield my virgin patent up
 " Unto his lordship, *whose unwished* yoke
 " My soul consents not to give sovereignty."

i. e. to give sovereignty *to*. Here too this editor has unnecessarily tampered with the text, and having contracted the word *unwished*, he exhibited the line thus :

" Unto his lordship, *to* whose *unwish'd* yoke
 " My soul consents not to give sovereignty."

an interpolation which was adopted in the subsequent copies, and which, with all the modern editors, I incautiously suffered to remain in my former edition.

The grave-digger in *Hamlet* observes " that your tanner will last you nine *year*," and such is the phraseology which Shakspeare always attributes to his lower characters; but instead of this, in the second folio, we find—" nine *years*."

" Your skill shall, like a star i' the *darkest* night,
 " Stick fry off indeed—"

says *Hamlet* to *Laertes*. But the editor of the second folio, conceiving, I suppose, that if a star appeared with extraordinary scintillation, the night must necessarily be luminous, reads—" i' the *brightest* night:" and, with equal sagacity, not acquiescing in *Edgar's* notion of "*four-inch'd* bridges," this editor has furnished him with a much safer pass, for he reads—" *four-arch'd* bridges."

In *King Henry VIII.* are these lines :

" ——— If we did think
 " His *contemplation* were above the earth—"

Not understanding this phraseology, and supposing that *were* must require a noun in the plural number, he reads :

" ——— If we did think
 " His *contemplations* were above the earth," &c.

Again, in *Troilus and Cressida*, Act IV. Sc. II.:

" With wings more *momentary-swift* than thought."

This compound epithet not being understood, he reads :

" With wings more *momentary*, *swifter* than thought."

In *The Taming of the Shrew*, Act I. Sc. II. Hortensio, describing Catharine, says,

“ Her only fault (and that is—*faults* enough)

“ Is,—that she is intolerable curst ;—”

meaning, that this one was a *host of faults*. But this not being comprehended by the editor of the second folio, with a view, doubtless, of rendering the passage more grammatical, he substituted—“ and that is *fault* enough.”

So, in *King Lear*, we find—“ Do you know this noble gentleman ?” But this editor supposing, it should seem, that a gentleman could not be noble, or that a noble could not be a gentleman, instead of the original text, reads—“ Do you know this *nobleman* ?”

In *Measure for Measure*, Act II. Sc. I. Escalus, addressing the Justice, says, “ I pray you home to dinner with me :” this familiar diction not being understood, we find in the second folio, “ I pray you go home to dinner with me.” And in *Othello*, not having sagacity enough to see that *apines* was printed by a mere transposition of the letters, for *paines*,

“ Though I do hate him, as I do hell *apines*,”

instead of correcting the word, he evaded the difficulty by omitting it, and exhibited the line in an imperfect state.

The Duke of York, in the third part of *King Henry VI.* exclaims,

“ That face of his the hungry cannibals

“ Would not have touch'd, would not have stain'd with blood.”

These lines being thus carelessly arranged in the first folio :

“ That face of his

“ The hungry cannibals would not have touch'd,

“ Would not have stain'd with blood—”

the editor of the second folio, leaving the first line imperfect as he found it, completed the last line by this absurd interpolation :

“ Would not have stain'd *the roses just* with blood.”

These are but a few of the numerous corruptions and interpolations found in that copy, from the editor's ignorance of Shakspeare's phraseology.

II. Let us now examine how far he was acquainted with the metre of these plays.

In *The Winter's Tale*, Act III. Sc. II. we find—

“What wheels? racks? fires? what flaying? boiling?

“In leads, or oils?”——

Not knowing that *fires* was used as a dissyllable, he added the word *burning* at the end of the line:

“What wheels? racks? fires? what flaying? boiling?

burning?”

So again, in *Julius Cæsar*, Act III. Sc. II. from the same ignorance, the word *all* has been interpolated by this editor:

“And with the brands *fire all* the traitors' houses.”

instead of the reading of the original and authentick copy,

“And with the brands *fire* the traitors' houses.”

Again, in *Macbeth*:

“I would, while it was smiling in my face,

“Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,

“And dash'd the brains out, had I so *sworn*

“As you have done to this.”

Not perceiving that *sworn* was used as a dissyllable, he reads—“had I *but* so sworn.”

Charms our poet sometimes uses as a word of two syllables. Thus, in the *Tempest*, Act I. Sc. II.:

“Curs'd be I, that did so! All the *charms*,” &c.

instead of which this editor gives us,

“Curs'd be I, that *I* did so! All the *charms*,” &c.

Hour is almost always used by Shakspeare as a dissyllable, but of this the editor of the second folio was ignorant; for instead of these lines in *King Richard II*:

“—— So sighs, and tears, and groans,

“Show minutes, times, and *hours*: but my time

“Runs posting on,” &c.

he gives us—

" ——— So sighs, and tears, and groans,
 " Show minutes, times, and hours: *O* but my time,"* &c.

So again, in *The Comedy of Errors* :

" I'll meet you in that place, some *hour*, *sir*, hence."

instead of the original reading,

" I'll meet you in that place some *hour* hence."

Again, in *The Winter's Tale*, Act I. Sc. II. :

" ——— wishing clocks more swift?

" Hours, minutes? *the* noon, midnight? and all eyes," &c.

instead of the original reading,

" Hours, minutes? noon, midnight? and all eyes," &c.

Again, in *All's Well that Ends Well*, Act II. Sc. III. :

" Which challenges itself as honours born,

" And is not like the *sire*. Honours thrive," &c.

This editor, not knowing that *sire* was used as a dissyllable, reads :

" And is not like the *sire*. Honours *best* thrive," &c.

So, in *King Henry VI.* P. I. :

" Rescued is Orleans from the *English*."

* In *Measure for Measure* we find these lines :

" ——— Merciful heaven!

" Thou rather, with thy sharp and sulphurous bolt,

" Split'st the unwedgeable and gnarled oak,

" Than the soft myrtle; — But man, proud man," &c.

There can be no doubt that a word was omitted in the last line; perhaps some epithet to *myrtle*. But the editor of the second folio, resorting to his usual expedient, absurdly reads:

" Than the soft myrtle. *O* but man, proud man—."

So, in *Titus Adronicus*, Act III. Sc. II. *complaynet* being corruptly printed instead of *complainer*,

" Speechless *complaynet*, I will learn thy thoughts—"
 this editor, with equal absurdity, reads:

" Speechless *complaint*, *O*, I will learn thy thoughts."

I have again and again had occasion to mention in the notes on these plays, that *omission* is of all the errors of the press that which most frequently happens. On collating the fourth edition of *King Richard III.* printed in 1612, with the second printed in 1598, I found no less than *twenty-six* words omitted.

Not knowing that *English* was used as a trisyllable, he has completed the line, which he supposed defective, according to his own fancy, and reads :

“ Rescued is Orleans from the English *wolves*.”

The same play furnishes us with various other proofs of his ignorance of our poet's metre. Thus, instead of

“ Orleans the bastard, Charles, Burgundy,—”

he has printed (not knowing that *Charles* was used as a word of two syllables,)

“ Orleans the bastard, Charles, *and* Burgundy.”

So, instead of the original reading,

“ Divinest creature, Astræa's daughter—”

(*Astræa* being used as a word of three syllables,) he has printed—

“ Divinest creature, *bright* Astræa's daughter.”

Again, *ibidem* :

“ Whereas the contrary bringeth bliss.”

Not knowing that *contrary* was used as a word of four syllables, he reads :

“ Whereas the contrary bringeth *forth* bliss.”

So *sure* is used in the same play, as a dissyllable :

“ Gloster, we'll meet : to thy cost, be *sure*.”

but this editor, not aware of this, reads :

“ Gloster, we'll meet ; to thy *dear* cost, be *sure*.”

Again, in King Henry VI. P. II. :

“ And so to *arms*, victorious father,—”

arms being used as a dissyllable. But the second folio reads :

“ And so to *arms*, victorious *noble* father.”

Again, in Twelfth-Night, Act I. Sc. I. we find—

“ ———— when liver, brain, and heart,

“ These sovereign thrones, are all supply'd, and fill'd,

“ (Her sweet perfections) with one self-king.”

for which the editor, not knowing that *perfections* was used as a quadrisyllable, has substituted—

“ ————— when liver, brain, and heart,
 “ These sovereign thrones, are all supply'd, and fill'd,
 “ (Her sweet perfections) with one *self-same* king.”

Again, in King Henry VI. P. II.:

“ Prove it, *Henry*, and thou shalt be king.”

for which the editor of the second folio, not knowing *Henry* to be used as a trisyllable, gives us,

“ *But* prove it, Henry, and thou shalt be king.”

In like manner *dazzled* is used by Shakspeare as a trisyllable in The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Act II. Sc. IV.:

“ And that hath *dazzled* my reason's light.”

instead of which, we find in the second folio,

“ And that hath *dazzled so* my reason's light.”

The words *neither*, *rather*, &c. are frequently used by Shakspeare as words of one syllable. So, in King Henry VI. P. III.:

“ And *neither* by treason, nor hostility,
 “ To seek to put me down.”

for which the editor of the second folio has given us,

“ Neither by treason, nor hostility,” &c.

In Timon of Athens, Act III. Sc. V. Alcibiades asks,

“ Is this the balsam, that the usuring senate
 “ *Pours* into captains' wounds? banishment?”

The editor of the second folio, not knowing that *pours* was used as a dissyllable, to complete the supposed defect in the metre reads:

“ Is this the balsam, that the usuring senate
 “ *Pours* into captains' wounds! *ha!* banishment?”

Tickled is often used by Shakspeare and the contemporary poets, as a word of three syllables. So in King Henry VI. P. II.:

“ She's *tickled* now; her fume *needs* no spurs.”

instead of which, in the second folio we have,—

“ She's tickled now; her fume *can need* no spurs.”

So, in *Titus Andronicus*, Act II. Sc. I.:

“Better than he have *worn* Vulcan’s badge.”

This editor, not knowing that *worn* was used as a dissyllable, reads:

“Better than he have *yet* worn Vulcan’s badge.

Again, in *Cymbeline*, Act II. Sc. V.:

“All faults that name, nay, that hell knows, why hers,

“In part, or all; but rather all: for even to vice,” &c.

These lines being thus carelessly distributed in the original copy,—

“All faults that name, nay, that hell knows,

“Why hers, in part, or all; but rather all:” &c.

the editor of the second folio, to supply the defect of the first line, arbitrarily reads, with equal ignorance of his author’s metre and phraseology,

“All faults that *may be named*, nay, that hell knows,

“Why hers,” &c.

In *King Henry IV. P. II. Act I. Sc. III.* is this line:

“And being now trimm’d in thine own desires—.”

instead of which the editor of the second folio, to remedy a supposed defect in the metre, has given us—

“And being now trimm’d *up* in thine own desire—.”

Again, in *As You Like It*, Act II. Sc. I.:

“——— he pierceth through

“The body of city, country, court—.”

instead of which we find in the second folio, (the editor not knowing that *country* was used as a trisyllable,)

“——— he pierceth through

“The body of *the* city, country, court.”

In like manner, in *The Winter’s Tale*, Act I. Sc. I. he has given us:

“——— we knew not

“The doctrine of ill-doing, *no* nor dream’d

“That any did:——”

instead of—

" ————— we knew not

" The doctrine of ill-doing, nor dream'd," &c.

doctrine being used as a word of three syllables.

" Pay him six thousand," &c. says Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*,

" Before a friend of this description

" Should lose a hair through Bassanio's fault."

the word *hair* being used as a dissyllable, or *Bassanio* as a quadrisyllable. Of this the editor of the second folio was wholly ignorant, and therefore reads :

" Should lose a hair through *my* Bassanio's fault."

In *The Winter's Tale*, Act IV. Sc. III. Florizel, addressing Perdita says,

" ————— my desires

" Run not before mine honour ; nor my lusts

" *Burn* hotter than my faith."

To complete the last hemistich, Perdita is made to reply,

" O but, sir,

" Your resolution cannot hold."

Here again this editor betrays his ignorance of Shakespeare's metre ; for not knowing that *burn* was used as a dissyllable, he reads—

" O but, *dear* sir," &c.

Again, in *King Henry VIII.* Act II. Sc. III. the Old Lady declares to Anne Boleyn,

" 'Tis strange ; a three-pence bow'd would *hire* me,

" Old as I am, to queen it."

But instead of this, *hire* not being perceived to be used as a word of two syllables, we find in the second folio,

" 'Tis strange ; a three-pence bow'd *now* would hire me," &c.

This editor, indeed, was even ignorant of the author's manner of accenting words, for in *The Tempest*, where we find,

" ————— Spirits, which by mine art

" I have from their *confines* called to enact

" My present fancies,—"

he exhibits the second line thus :

“ I have from *all* their confines call'd to enact,” &c.

Again, in King Lear, Act II. Sc. I. instead of—

“ To have the expence and waste of *his* revénues,—”

the latter word, being, I suppose, differently accented after our poet's death, the editor of the second folio has given us,

“ To have the expence and waste of révenues.”

Various other instances of the same kind might be produced ; but that I may not weary my readers, I will only add, that no person who wishes to peruse the plays of Shakspeare should ever open the Second Folio, or either of the subsequent copies, in which all these capricious alterations were adopted, with many additional errors and innovations.

It may seem strange, that the person to whom the care of supervising the second folio was consigned, should have been thus ignorant of our poet's language : but it should be remembered, that in the beginning of the reign of Charles the First many words and modes of speech began to be disused, which had been common in the age of Queen Elizabeth. The editor of the second folio was probably a young man, perhaps born in the year 1600. That Sir William D'Avenant, who was born in 1605, did not always perfectly understand our author's language, is manifest from various alterations which he has made in some of his pieces. The successive Chronicles of English history, which were compiled between the years 1540 and 1630, afford indubitable proofs of the gradual change in our phraseology during that period. Thus a narrative which Hall exhibits in what now appears to us as very uncouth and ancient diction, is again exhibited by Holinshed, about forty years afterwards, in somewhat a less rude form ; and in the chronicles of Speed and Baker in 1611 and 1630, assumes a somewhat more polished air. In the second edition of Gascoigne's Poems printed in 1587, the editor thought it necessary to explain many of the words by placing more familiar terms in the margin, though not much more than twenty years had elapsed from the time of their composition : so rapid were, at that time, the changes in our language.

My late friend Mr. Tyrwhitt, a man of such candour, accuracy, and profound learning, that his death must be considered as an irreparable loss to literature, was of opinion, that in printing these plays the original spelling should be adhered to, and that we never could be sure of a perfectly faithful edition, unless the first folio copy was made the standard, and actually sent to the press, with such corrections as the editor might think proper. By others it was suggested, that the notes should not be subjoined to the text, but placed at the end of each volume, and that they should be accompanied by a complete Glossary. The former scheme (that of sending the first folio to the press) appeared to me liable to many objections: and I am confident that if the notes were detached from the text, many readers would remain uninformed, rather than undergo the trouble occasioned by perpetual references from one part of a volume to another.

In the present edition I have endeavoured to obtain all the advantages which would have resulted from Mr. Tyrwhitt's plan, without any of its inconveniences. Having often experienced the fallaciousness of collation by the eye, I determined, after I had adjusted the text in the best manner in my power, to have every proof-sheet of my work read aloud to me while I perused the first folio, for those plays which first appeared in that edition; and for all those which had been previously printed, the first quarto copy, excepting only in the instances of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *King Henry V.* which, being either sketches or imperfect copies, could not be wholly relied on; and *King Richard III.** of the earliest edition of which tragedy I was not possessed. I had at the same time before me a table which I had formed of the variations between the quartos and the folio. By this laborious process not a single innovation, made either by the editor of the second folio, or any of the modern editors, could escape me. From the Index to all the words and phrases explained or illustrated in the notes, which I

* At the time the tragedy of *King Richard III.* was in the press, I was obliged to make use of the *second* edition printed in 1598; but have since been furnished with the edition of 1597, which I have collated *verbatim*, and the most material variations are noticed in the appendix.

have subjoined to this work *, every use may be derived which the most copious Glossary could afford ; while those readers who are less intent on philological inquiries, by the notes being appended to the text, are relieved from the irksome task of seeking information in a different volume from that immediately before them.

If it be asked, what has been the fruit of all this labour, I answer, that many innovations, transpositions, &c. have been detected by this means ; many hundred emendations have been made †, and, I trust, a genuine

* If the explication of any word or phrase should appear unsatisfactory, the reader, by turning to the Glossarial Index, may know at once whether any additional information has been obtained on the subject. Thus, in *Macbeth*, vol. iv. p. 392, Dr. Warburton's erroneous interpretation of the word *blood-bolter'd* is inserted ; but the true explication of that provincial term may be found in the Appendix. So of the phrase, " Will you take eggs for money " in *The Winter's Tale* ; and some others.

† Lest this assertion should be supposed to be made without evidence, I subjoin a list of the restorations made from the original copy, and supported by contemporary usage, in two plays only : *The Winter's Tale* and *King John*. The lines in the former instance are exhibited as they appear in the edition of 1778, (as being much more correctly printed than that of 1785,) those which follow as they appear in the present edition (i. e. Mr. Malone's, in ten volumes 1790.)

THE WINTER'S TALE.

1. " ———I'll give *you* my commission,
 " To let him there a month." P. 293.
 " ———I'll give *him* my commission,
 " To let him there a month." P. 125.
2. " ———we know not
 " The doctrine of ill-doing, *no*, nor dream'd—" P. 295.
 " ———we know not
 " The doctrine of ill-doing ; nor dream'd—" P. 126.
3. " As o'er-dyed blacks, as *winds*, as waters ;—" P. 300.
 " As o'er-dy'd blacks, as *wind*, as waters ;—" P. 130.
4. " As ornament oft does." P. 302.
 " As ornaments oft do." P. 130.

The original copy, with a disregard of grammar, reads—" As ornaments oft does." This inaccuracy has been constantly cor-

text has been formed. Wherever any deviation is made

rected by every editor, wherever it occurs; but the correction should always be made in the verb, and not in the noun.

5. "Have you not—thought (for cogitation
 "Resides not in the man that does not think *it*)
 "My wife is slippery?" P. 408.
 "Have you not—thought (for cogitation
 "Resides not in the man that does not think)
 "My wife is slippery?" P. 138.
6. "——wishing clocks more swift?
 "Hours, minutes, *the* noon midnight? and all eyes,—"
 P. 408.
 "——wishing clocks more swift?
 "Hours minutes? noon midnight? and all eyes,—"
 P. 139.
7. "—— Ay, and thou,—who may'st see
 "How I am gall'd—*thou* might'st be-spice a cup,—"
 P. 309.
 "—— Ay, and thou,—who may'st see
 "How I am galled,—might'st be-spice a cup,—"
 P. 140.
8. "—— I'll keep my *stable* where
 "I lodge my wife;—" P. 325.
 "—— I'll keep my *stables* where
 "I lodge my wife;—" P. 153.
9. "Relish *as* truth like us." P. 317.
 "Relish *a* truth like us." P. 156.
10. "And I beseech you, hear me, who *profess*—" P. 333.
 "And I beseech you, hear me, who *professes*—" P. 162.
11. "This *session* to our great grief,—" P. 343.
 "This *sessions* to our great grief,—" P. 170
12. "The bug which you *will* fright me with, I seek." P. 347.
 "The bug which you *would* fright me with, I seek."
 P. 175.
13. "You here shall swear upon *the* sword of justice,—"
 P. 349.
 "You here shall swear upon *this* sword of justice,—"
 P. 177.
14. "The *session* shall proceed." P. 349.
 "The *sessions* shall proceed." P. 178.
15. "Which you knew great; and to the *certain* hazard
 "Of all incertainties—" P. 350.
 "Which you knew great, and to the hazard
 "Of all incertainties—" P. 179.

from the authentick copies, except in the case of mere

Some word was undoubtedly omitted at the press; (probably *fearful* or *doubtful*;) but I thought it better to exhibit the line in an imperfect state, than to adopt the interpolation made by the editor of the second folio, who has introduced perhaps as unfit a word as could have been chosen.

16. " *Through* my dark rust! and how his piety—" P. 360.

" *Thorough* my rust! and how his piety—" P. 179.

The first word of the line is in the old copy by the mistake of the compositor printed *Through*.

17. " O but *dear* sir,—" P. 375.

" O but, sir,—" P. 200.

18. " Your discontenting father *I'll* strive to qualify,—"

P. 401.

" Your discontenting father strive to qualify,—" P. 224.

19. " If I thought it were *not* a piece of honesty to acquaint the king withal, *I would* do it." P. 407.

" If I thought it were a piece of honesty to acquaint the king withal, *I'd not* do it." P. 229.

20. " Dost thou think, for that I insinuate *or* toze—"

P. 402.

" Dost thou think, for that I insinuate *and* toze—"

P. 231.

21. " You might have *spoke* a thousand things—" P. 414.

" You might have *spoken* a thousand things,—" P. 235.

22. " Where we *offend* her now, appear—" P. 417.

" Where we *offenders* now appear—" P. 237.

23. " Once more to look on.

" *Sir*, by his command,—" P. 420.

" Once more to look on *him*.

" By his command,—" P. 240.

24. " — like a weather *beaten* conduit." P. 425.

" — like a weather-*bitten* conduit." P. 246.

25. " ——— This your son-in-law,

" And son unto the king, *who*, heaven's directing,

" Is troth-plight to your daughter." P. 437.

" ——— This your son-in-law,

" And son unto the king, (*whom* heavens directing,)

" Is troth-plight to your daughter;" P. 257.

KING JOHN.

1. " Which fault lies on the *hazard* of all husbands. P. 10.

" Which fault lies on the *hazards* of all husbands."

P. 451.

obvious errors of the press‡, the reader is apprized by a

2. " 'Tis too respective, and too sociable.
 " For your *conversing*." P. 14.
 " 'Tis too respective, and too sociable,
 " For your *conversion*." P. 456.
3. " Thus leaning on *my* elbow,—" P. 16.
 " Thus leaning on *mine* elbow,—" P. 457.
4. " With them a bastard of the *king* deceas'd." P. 25.
 " With them a bastard of the *king's* deceas'd." P. 464.
5. " That thou hast under-wrought *its* lawful king." P. 26.
 " That thou hast under-wrought *his* lawful king." P. 465.
6. " Say, shall the current of our right *run* on?" P. 37.
 " Say, shall the current of our right *roam* on?" P. 476.
7. " And now he feasts, *mouthing* the flesh of men,—"
 P. 38.
 " And now he feasts, *mousing* the flesh of men,—"
 P. 477.
8. " A greater power than *ye*—" P. 39.
 " A greater power than *we*—" P. 478.
9. " For grief is proud, and makes his owner *stoop*." P. 52.
 " For grief is proud, and makes his owner *stout*." P. 492.
10. " O, that a man *would* speak these words to me!" P. 52.
 " O, that a man *should* speak these words to me!" P. 497.
11. " *Is't* not amiss, when it is truly done?" P. 64.
 " *Is* not amiss, when it is truly done." P. 504.
12. " Then, in despite of *broad-ey'd* watchful day,—" P. 72.
 " Then, in despite of *brooded* watchful day,—" P. 512.
13. " A whole armado of *collected* sail." P. 74.
 " A whole armado of *convicted* sail." P. 514.
14. " And bitter shame hath spoil'd the sweet *world's* taste." P. 79.
 " And bitter shame hath spoil'd the sweet *word's* taste." P. 519.
15. " Strong reasons make *strong* actions." P. 81.
 " Strong reasons make *strange* actions." P. 522.
16. " *Must* make a stand at what your highness will." P. 89.
 " *Doth* make a stand at what your highness will." P. 530.

note; and every emendation that has been adopted, is

17. "Had none, my lord! why, did *not you* provoke me?" P. 96.
 "Had none, my lord! why, did *you not* provoke me?" P. 536.
18. "*Mad'st* it no conscience to destroy a king." P. 97.
 "*Made* it no conscience to destroy a king." P. 537.
19. "Sir, sir, impatience has *its* privilege." P. 102.
 "Sir, sir, impatience has *his* privilege." P. 541.
20. "Or, when he doom'd this beauty to *the* grave,—"
 P. 102.
 "Or, when he doom'd this beauty to *a* grave,—"
 P. 541.
21. "To the yet-unbegotten *sins* of *time*." P. 102.
 "To the yet-unbegotten *sin* of *times*." P. 541.
22. "And breathing to *this* breathless excellence,—"
 P. 102.
 "And breathing to *his* breathless excellence,—"
 P. 542.
23. "And your *supplies*, which you have wish'd so long,—"
 P. 121.
 "And your *supply*, which you have wish'd so long,—"
 P. 561.
24. "What's that to thee? Why may *I not* demand—"
 P. 122.
 "What's that to thee? Why may *not I* demand—"
 P. 562.
25. "O, my sweet sir, news *fitted* to the night." P. 123.
 "O, my sweet sir, news *fitting* to the night." P. 563.
26. "Death, having prey'd upon the outward parts,
 "Leaves them; *invisible* his siege is now
 "Against the mind,—"
 P. 124.
 "Death, having prey'd upon the outward parts,
 "Leaves them invisible; *and* his siege is now
 "Against the mind,—"
 P. 565.
27. "The salt *of* them is hot." P. 125.
 "The salt *in* them is hot." P. 568.

Two other restorations in this play I have not set down:

- and— "Before we will lay *down* our just-borne arms—" Act II. Sc. II.
 "Be these sad *signs* confirmers of thy word." Act III. Sc. I.

because I pointed them out on a former occasion.

It may perhaps be urged that some of the variations in these lists, are of no great consequence; but to preserve our poet's genuine text is certainly important; for otherwise, as Dr. Johnson

ascribed to its proper author. When it is considered that

has justly observed, "the history of our language will be lost;" and as our poet's words are changed, we are constantly in danger of losing his meaning also. Every reader must wish to peruse what Shakspeare wrote, supported at once by the authority of the authentick copies, and the usage of his contemporaries, rather than what the editor of the second folio, or Pope, or Hanmer, or Warburton, have arbitrarily substituted in its place.

Let me not, however, be misunderstood. *All* these variations have not been discovered by the present collation, some of them having been pointed out by preceding editors; but such as had been already noticed were merely pointed out: the original readings are now established and supported by the usage of our poet himself and that of his contemporaries, and restored to the text, instead of being degraded to the bottom of the page.

‡ That I may be accurately understood, I subjoin a few of these unnoticed corrections:

In King Henry VI. P. I. Act I. Sc. VI:

"Thy promises are like Adonis' *gardens*,

"That one day bloom'd and fruitful were the next."

The old copy reads—*garden*.

In King John, Act IV. Sc. II:

"——— that close aspect of his

"*Does* shew the mood of a much-troubled breast."

The old copy reads—*Do*.

Ibidem, Act I. Sc. I:

"'Tis too respective, and too sociable," &c.

The old copy,—'Tis *two* respective," &c.

Again, in the same play, we find in the original copy:

"Against the *inuoluerable* clouds of heaven."

In King Henry V. Act V. Sc. II:

"Corrupting in *its* own fertility."

The old copy reads—*it*.

In Timon of Athens, Act I. Sc. I:

"*Come*, shall we in?"

The old copy has—*Comes*.

Ibidem: "Even on their knees, and *hands*—."

The old copy has—*hand*.

In Cymbeline, Act III. Sc. IV:

"The handmaids of all women, or, more truly,

"Woman *its* pretty self."

The old copy has—*it*.

It cannot be expected that the page should be encumbered with the notice of such obvious mistakes of the press as are here enumerated. With the exception of errors such as these, whenever any emendation has been adopted, it is mentioned in a note, and ascribed to its author.

there are one hundred thousand lines in these plays, and that it often was necessary to consult six or seven volumes, in order to ascertain by which of the preceding editors, from the time of the publication of the second folio, each emendation was made, it will easily be believed, that this was not effected without much trouble.

Whenever I mention *the old copy* in my notes, if the play be one originally printed in quarto, I mean the first quarto copy; if the play appeared originally in folio, I mean the first folio; and when I mention the old copies, I mean the first quarto and first folio, which, when that expression is used, it may be concluded, concur in the same reading. In like manner, *the folio* always means the first folio, and *the quarto*, the earliest quarto, with the exceptions already mentioned. In general, however, the date of each quarto is given, when it is cited. Where there are two quarto copies printed in the same year, they are particularly distinguished, and the variations noticed.

The two great duties of an editor are, to exhibit the genuine text of his author, and to explain his obscurities. Both of these objects have been so constantly before my eyes, that, I am confident, one of them will not be found to have been neglected for the other. I can with perfect truth say, with Dr. Johnson, that “not a single passage in the whole work has appeared to me obscure, which I have not endeavoured to illustrate.” I have examined the notes of all the editors, and my own former remarks, with equal rigour; and have endeavoured as much as possible to avoid all controversy, having constantly had in view a philanthropick observation made by the editor above mentioned: “I know not (says that excellent writer,) why our editors should, with such implacable anger, persecute their predecessors. Οἱ νεκροὶ μὴ λάνθωσιν, the dead, it is true, can make no resistance, they may be attacked with great security; but since they can neither feel nor mend, the safety of mauling them seems greater than the pleasure: nor perhaps would it much misbeseem us to remember, amidst our triumphs over the *nonsensical* and the *senseless*, that we likewise are men; that *debemur morti*, and, as Swift observed to Burnet, shall soon be among the dead ourselves.”

I have in general given the true explication of a passage, by whomsoever made, without loading the page with the preceding unsuccessful attempts at elucidation, and by

this means have obtained room for much additional illustration: for, as on the one hand, I trust very few superfluous or unnecessary annotations have been admitted, so on the other, I believe, that not a single valuable explication of any obscure passage in these plays has ever appeared, which will not be found in the following volumes.

The admirers of this poet will, I trust, not merely pardon the great accession of new notes in the present edition, but examine them with some degree of pleasure. An idle notion has been propagated, that Shakspeare has been *buried under his commentators*; and it has again and again been repeated by the tasteless and the dull, "that notes, though often necessary, are *necessary evils*." There is no person, I believe, who has an higher respect for the authority of Dr. Johnson than I have; but he has been misunderstood, or misrepresented, as if these words contained a general caution to *all* the readers of this poet. Dr. Johnson, in the part of his preface here alluded to, is addressing the *young* reader, to whom Shakspeare is *new*; and him he very judiciously counsels to "read every play from the first scene to the last, with utter negligence of all his commentators.—Let him read on, through brightness and obscurity, through integrity and corruption; let him preserve his comprehension of the dialogue, and his interest in the fable." But to much the greater and more enlightened part of his readers, (for how few are there comparatively to whom Shakspeare is new?) he gives a very different advice: Let them to whom the pleasures of novelty have ceased, "attempt exactness, and read the commentators."

During the era of conjectural criticism and capricious innovation, notes were indeed evils; while one page was covered with ingenious sophistry in support of some idle conjecture, and another was wasted in its overthrow, or in erecting a new fabrick equally unsubstantial as the former. But this era is now happily past away: and conjecture and emendation have given place to rational explanation. We shall never, I hope, again be told, that "as the best guesser was the best diviner, so he may be said in some measure to be the best editor of Shakspeare*." Let me not, however, be supposed an enemy to all conjectural emendation; sometimes undoubtedly

* Newton's Preface to his edition of Milton.

we must have recourse to it; but, like the machinery of the ancient drama, let it not be resorted to except in cases of difficulty; “*nisi dignus vindice nodus.*” “I wish (says Dr. Johnson) we all conjectured less, and explained more.” When our poet’s entire library shall have been discovered, and the fables of all his plays traced to their original source, when every temporary allusion shall have been pointed out, and every obscurity elucidated, then, and not till then, let the accumulation of notes be complained of. I scarcely remember ever to have looked into a book of the age of Queen Elizabeth, in which I did not find somewhat that tended to throw a light on these plays. While our object is, to support and establish what the poet wrote, to illustrate his phraseology by comparing it with that of his contemporaries, and to explain his fugitive allusions to customs long since disused and forgotten, while this object is kept steadily in view, if even every line of his plays were accompanied with a comment, every intelligent reader would be indebted to the industry of him who produced it. Such uniformly has been the object of the notes now presented to the publick. Let us then hear no more of this barbarous jargon concerning Shakspeare’s having been *elucidated* into *obscurity*, and buried under the load of his commentators. Dryden is said to have regretted the success of his own instructions, and to have lamented that at length, in consequence of his critical prefaces, the town had become too skilful to be easily satisfied. The same observation may be made with respect to many of these objectors, to whom the meaning of some of our poet’s most difficult passages is now become so familiar, that they fancy they originally understood them “without a prompter” and with great gravity exclaim against the unnecessary illustrations furnished by his Editors; nor ought we much to wonder at this; for our poet himself has told us,

“ ——— ’tis a common proof,
 “ That lowliness is young ambition’s ladder,
 “ Whereto the climber upward turns his face;
 “ But when he once attains the upmost round,
 “ He then unto the ladder turns his back;
 “ Looks in the clouds.”—

I have constantly made it a rule in revising the notes of former editors, to compare such passages as they have

cited from any author, with the book from which the extract was taken, if I could procure it; by which some inaccuracies have been rectified. The incorrect extract made by Dr. Warburton from Saviola's treatise on Honour and Honourable Quarrels, to illustrate a passage in *As You Like It*, fully proves the propriety of such a collation.

At the end of the tenth volume I have added an Appendix, containing corrections, and supplemental observations, made too late to be annexed to the plays to which they belong. Some object to an Appendix; but, in my opinion, with very little reason. No book can be the worse for such a supplement; since the reader, if such be his caprice, need not examine it. If the objector means, that he wishes that all the information contained in an Appendix, were properly disposed in the preceding volumes, it must be acknowledged that such an arrangement would be extremely desirable; but as well might he require from the elephant the sprightliness and agility of the squirrel, or from the squirrel the wisdom and strength of the elephant, as expect, that an editor's latest thoughts, suggested by discursive reading while the sheets that compose his volumes were passing through the press, should form a part of his original work; that information acquired too late to be employed in its proper place, should yet be found there.

That the very few stage directions which the old copies exhibit, were not taken from our author's manuscripts, but furnished by the players, is proved by one in *Macbeth*, Act IV. Sc. I. where "*A show of eight kings*" is directed, "*and Banquo last, with a glass in his hand;*" though from the very words which the poet has written for *Macbeth*, it is manifest that the glass ought to be borne by the eighth king, and not by Banquo. All the stage-directions therefore throughout this work I have considered as wholly in my power, and have regulated them in the best manner I could. The reader will also, I think, be pleased to find the place in which every scene is supposed to pass, precisely ascertained: a species of information, for which, though it often throws light on the dialogue, we look in vain in the ancient copies, and which has been too much neglected by the modern editors.

The play of *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, which is now once more restored to our author, I originally intended to have subjoined, with *Titus Andronicus*, to the tenth volume;

but, to preserve an equality of size in my volumes, have been obliged to give it a different place. The hand of Shakspeare being indubitably found in that piece, it will, I doubt not, be considered as a valuable accession; and it is of little consequence where it appears.

It has long been thought, that *Titus Andronicus* was not written originally by Shakspeare; about seventy years after his death, Ravenscroft having mentioned that he had been "told by some anciently conversant with the stage, that our poet only gave some master-touches to one or two of the principal parts or characters." The very curious papers lately discovered in Dulwich College, from which large extracts are given at the end of the *History of the Stage*, prove, what I long since suspected, that this play, and *The First Part of King Henry VI.* were in possession of the scene when Shakspeare began to write for the stage; and the same manuscripts show, that it was then very common for a dramattick poet to alter and amend the work of a preceding writer. The question therefore is now decisively settled; and undoubtedly some additions were made to both these pieces by Shakspeare. It is observable that the second scene of the third act of *Titus Andronicus* is not found in the quarto copy printed in 1611. It is therefore highly probable, that this scene was added by our author; and his hand may be traced in the preceding act, as well as in a few other places *. The additions which he made to *Pericles* are much more numerous, and therefore more strongly entitle it to a place among the dramattick pieces which he has adorned by his pen.

With respect to the other contested plays, *Sir John Oldcastle*, *The London Prodigal*, &c. which have now for near two centuries been falsely ascribed to our author, the manuscripts above mentioned completely clear him from that imputation; and prove, that while his great modesty made him set but little value on his own inimitable productions, he could patiently endure to have the miserable trash of other writers publicly imputed to him, without taking any measure to vindicate his fame. *Sir John Oldcastle*, we find from indubitable evidence, though

* If ever the account-book of Mr. Heminge shall be discovered, we shall probably find in it—"Paid to William Shakspeare for mending *Titus Andronicus*." See vol. iii.

ascribed in the title-page to "William Shakspeare," and printed in the year 1600, when his fame was in its meridian, was the joint-production of four other poets; Michael Drayton, Anthony Mundy, Richard Hathwaye, and Robert Wilson*.

In the Dissertation annexed to the three parts of King Henry the Sixth, I have discussed at large the question concerning their authenticity; and have assigned my reasons for thinking that the second and third of those plays were formed by Shakspeare, on two elder dramas now extant. Any disquisition therefore concerning these controverted pieces is here unnecessary.

Some years ago I published a short Essay on the economy and usages of our old theatres. The Historical Account of the English Stage, which has been formed on that essay, has swelled to such a size, in consequence of various researches since made, and a great accession of very valuable materials, that it is become almost a new work. Of these, the most important are the curious papers which have been discovered at Dulwich, and the very valuable Office-book of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels to King James and King Charles the First, which have contributed to throw much light on our dramatick history, and furnished some singular anecdotes of the poets of those times.

Twelve years have elapsed since the Essay on the order of time in which the plays of Shakspeare were written, first appeared. A re-examination of these plays since that time has furnished me with several particulars in confirmation of what I had formerly suggested on this subject. On a careful revisal of that Essay, which, I hope, is improved as well as considerably enlarged, I had the satisfaction of observing that I had found reason to attribute but two plays to an era widely distant from that to which they had been originally ascribed; and to make only a minute change in the arrangement of a few others. Some information, however, which has been obtained since that Essay was printed in its present form, inclines me to think, that one of the two plays which I allude to, *The Winter's Tale*, was a still later production than I have supposed; for I have now good reason to believe, that it was first

* Vol. iii. p. 329.

exhibited in the year 1613*; and that consequently it must have been one of our poet's latest works.

Though above a century and a half has elapsed since the death of Shakspeare, it is somewhat extraordinary, (as I observed on a former occasion,) that none of his various editors should have attempted to separate his genuine poetical compositions from the spurious performances with which they have been long intermixed; or have taken the trouble to compare them with the earliest and most authentick copies. Shortly after his death, a very incorrect impression of his poems was issued out, which in every subsequent edition, previous to the year 1780, was implicitly followed. They have been carefully revised, and with many additional illustrations are now a second time faithfully printed from the original copies, excepting only *Venus and Adonis*, of which I have not been able to procure the first impression†. The second edition, printed in 1596, was obligingly transmitted to me by the late Reverend Thomas Warton, of whose friendly and valuable correspondence I was deprived by death, when these volumes were almost ready to be issued from the press. It is painful to recollect how many of (I had almost said) my coadjutors have died since the present work was begun: —the elegant scholar, and ingenious writer, whom I have just mentioned; Dr. Johnson, and Mr. Tyrwhitt: men, from whose approbation of my labours I had promised myself much pleasure, and whose stamp could give a value and currency to any work.

With the materials which I have been so fortunate as to obtain, relative to our poet, his kindred, and friends, it would not have been difficult to have formed a new *Life of Shakspeare*, less meagre and imperfect than that left us by Mr. Rowe: but the information which I have procured having been obtained at very different times, it is necessarily dispersed, partly in the copious notes subjoined to Rowe's *Life*, and partly in the *Historical Account of our old Actors*. At some future time I hope to weave the whole into one uniform and connected narrative.

* See the *Essay on the Chronological Order of Shakspeare's Plays*, vol. ii. BOSWELL.

† He afterwards procured the first edition, from which that poem is now printed. BOSWELL.

My inquiries having been carried on almost to the very moment of publication, some circumstances relative to our poet were obtained too late to be introduced into any part of the present work. Of these due use will be made hereafter.

The prefaces of Theobald, Hanmer, and Warburton, I have not retained, because they appeared to me to throw no light on our author or his works: the room which they would have taken up, will, I trust, be found occupied by more valuable matter.

As some of the preceding editors have justly been condemned for innovation, so perhaps (for of objections there is no end,) I may be censured for too strict an adherence to the ancient copies. I have constantly had in view the Roman sentiment adopted by Dr. Johnson, that "it is more honourable to save a citizen than to destroy an enemy," and, like him, "have been more careful to protect than to attack."—"I do not wish the reader to forget, (says the same writer,) that the most commodious (and he might have added, the most forcible and elegant,) is not always the true reading.*" On this principle I have uniformly proceeded, having resolved never to deviate from the authentick copies, merely because the phraseology was harsh or uncommon. Many passages, which have heretofore been considered as corrupt, and are now supported by the usage of contemporary writers, fully prove the propriety of this caution†.

* King Henry IV. Part II.

† See particularly *The Merchant of Venice*, vol. v. p. 68.

"—— That many may be meant

"By the fool multitude."

with the note there.

We undoubtedly should not now write—

"But, lest myself be *guilty to self-wrong*,—"

yet we find this phrase in *The Comedy of Errors*, vol. iv. p. 214, n. 4. See also *The Winter's Tale*, vol. xiv. p. 428, n. 5.

"——— This your son-in-law,

"And son unto the king, (*whom heavens directing*),

"Is troth-plight to your daughter."

Measure for Measure, vol. ix. p. 156, n. 1; "—to be so *bared*,—"
Coriolanus, vol. xiv. p. 133, n. 2:

"Which often, thus, correcting thy stout heart," &c.

Hamlet, vol. vii. p. 203, n. 2:

"That he might not *beteem* the winds of heaven," &c.

The rage for innovation till within these last thirty years was so great, that many words were dismissed from our poet's text, which in his time were current in every mouth. In all the editions since that of Mr. Rowe, in the Second Part of King Henry IV. the word *channel** has been rejected, and *kennel* substituted in its room, though the former term was commonly employed in the same sense in the time of our author; and the learned Bishop of Worcester has strenuously endeavoured to prove that in Cymbeline the poet wrote—not *shakes* but *shuts* or *checks*, "all our buds from growing †;" though the authenticity of the original reading is established beyond all controversy by two other passages of Shakspeare. Very soon, indeed, after his death, this rage for innovation seems to have seized his editors; for in the year 1616 an edition of his Rape of Lucrece was published, which was said to be newly revised and corrected; but in which, in fact, several arbitrary changes were made, and the ancient diction rejected for one somewhat more modern. Even in the first complete collection of his plays published in 1623, some changes were undoubtedly made from ignorance of his meaning and phraseology. They had, I suppose, been made in the playhouse copies after his retirement from the theatre. Thus in Othello, Brabantio is made to call to his domesticks to raise "some special officers of *might*," instead of "officers of *night*;" and the phrase "*of all loves*," in the same play, not being understood, "*for love's sake*" was substituted in its room. So, in Hamlet, we have *ere ever* for *or ever*, and *rites* instead of the more ancient word, *crants*. In King Lear, Act I. Sc. I. the substitution of—"Goes thy heart with this?" instead of

As You Like It, vol. vi. p. 396, n. 7:

"My voice is *ragged*, —."

Cymbeline, vol. xiii. p. 228, n. 2:

"Whom heavens, in justice, (both on her and hers,)

"Have laid most heavy hand."

* Act II. Sc. I: "— throw the quean in the *channel*." In that passage, as in many others, I have silently restored the original reading, without any observation; but the word in this sense, being now obsolete, should have been illustrated by a note. This defect, however, will be found remedied in K. Henry VI. P. II. Act II. Sc. II:

"As if a *channel* should be call'd a sea."

† Hurd's Hor. 4th edit. vol. i. p. 55.

—"Goes this with thy heart?" without doubt arose from the same cause. In the plays of which we have no quarto copies, we may be sure that similar innovations were made, though we have now no certain means of detecting them.

After what has been proved concerning the sophistications and corruptions of the Second Folio, we cannot be surprised that when these plays were republished by Mr. Rowe in the beginning of this century from a later folio, in which the interpolations of the former were all preserved, and many new errors added, almost every page of his work was disfigured by accumulated corruptions. In Mr. Pope's edition our author was not less misrepresented; for though by examining the oldest copies he detected some errors, by his numerous fanciful alterations the poet was so completely modernized, that I am confident, had he "re-visited the glimpses of the moon," he would not have understood his own works. From the quartos indeed a few valuable restorations were made; but all the advantage that was thus obtained, was outweighed by arbitrary changes, transpositions, and interpolations.

The readers of Shakspeare being disgusted with the liberties taken by Mr. Pope, the subsequent edition of Theobald was justly preferred; because he professed to adhere to the ancient copies more strictly than his competitor, and illustrated a few passages by extracts from the writers of our poet's age. That his work should at this day be considered of any value, only shows how long impressions will remain, when they are once made; for Theobald, though not so great an innovator as Pope, was yet a considerable innovator; and his edition being printed from that of his immediate predecessor, while a few arbitrary changes made by Pope were detected, innumerable sophistications were silently adopted. His knowledge of the contemporary authors was so scanty, that all the illustration of that kind dispersed throughout his volumes, has been exceeded by the researches which have since been made for the purpose of elucidating a single play.

Of Sir Thomas Hanmer it is only necessary to say, that he adopted almost all the innovations of Pope, adding to them whatever caprice dictated.

To him succeeded Dr. Warburton, a critick, who (as hath been said of Salmasius) seems to have erected his throne on a heap of stones, that he might have them at

hand to throw at the heads of all those who passed by. His unbounded licence in substituting his own chimerical conceits in the place of the author's genuine text, has been so fully shown by his revisers, that I suppose no critical reader will ever again open his volumes. An hundred strappadoes, according to an Italian comick writer, would not have induced Petrarch, were he living, to subscribe to the meaning which certain commentators after his death had by their glosses extorted from his works. It is a curious speculation to consider how many thousand would have been requisite for this editor to have inflicted on our great dramattick poet for the same purpose. The defence which has been made for Dr. Warburton on this subject, by some of his friends, is singular. "He well knew," it has been said, "that much the greater part of his notes do not throw any light on the poet of whose works he undertook the revision, and that he frequently imputed to Shakspeare a meaning of which he never thought; but the editor's great object was to display his own learning, not to illustrate his author, and this end he obtained; for in spite of all the clamour against him, his work added to his reputation as a scholar."—Be it so then; but let none of his admirers ever dare to unite his name with that of Shakspeare; and let us at least be allowed to wonder, that the learned editor should have had so little respect for the greatest poet that has appeared since the days of Homer, as to use a commentary on his works merely as "a stalking-horse, under the presentation of which he might shoot his wit."

At length the task of revising these plays was undertaken by one, whose extraordinary powers of mind, as they rendered him the admiration of his contemporaries, will transmit his name to posterity as the brightest ornament of the eighteenth century; and will transmit it without competition, if we except a great orator, philosopher, and statesman*, now living, whose talents and virtues are an honour to human nature. In 1765, Dr. Johnson's edition, which had long been impatiently expected, was given to the publick. His admirable preface, (perhaps the finest composition in our language,) his happy, and in general just, characters of these plays, his refutation of the false glosses of Theobald and Warburton, and his

* The Right Honourable Edmund Burke.

numerous explications of involved and difficult passages, are too well known to be here enlarged upon; and therefore I shall only add, that his vigorous and comprehensive understanding threw more light on his author than all his predecessors had done.

In one observation, however, concerning our poet, I do not entirely concur with him. "It is not (he remarks) very grateful to consider how little the succession of editors has added to this author's power of pleasing. He was read, admired, studied, and imitated, while he was yet deformed with all the improprieties which ignorance and neglect could accumulate upon him."

He certainly was read, admired, studied, and imitated, at the period mentioned; but surely not in the same degree as at present. The succession of editors has effected this; it has made him understood; it has made him popular; it has shown every one who is capable of reading, how much superior he is not only to Jonson and Fletcher, whom the bad taste of the last age from the time of the Restoration to the end of the century set above him, but to all the dramattick poets of antiquity:

———— Jam monte potitus,
Ridet anhelantem dura ad vestigia turbam.

Every author who pleases must surely please more as he is more understood, and there can be no doubt that Shakspeare is now infinitely better understood than he was in the last century. To say nothing of the people at large, it is clear that Dryden himself, though a great admirer of our poet, and D'Avenant, though he wrote for the stage in the year 1627, did not always understand him*. The very books which are necessary to our author's

* "The tongue in general is so much refined since Shakspeare's time, that many of his words, and more of his phrases, are *scarce intelligible*." Preface to Dryden's *Troilus and Cressida*. The various changes made by Dryden in particular passages in that play, and by him and D'Avenant in *The Tempest*, prove decisively that they frequently did not understand our poet's language.

In his defence of the Epilogue to *The Conquest of Granada*, Dryden arraigns Ben Jonson for using the personal, instead of the neutral, pronoun, and *unfeard* for *unafraid*:

"Though heaven should speak with all *his* wrath at once,
"We should stand upright, and *unfeard*."

illustration, were of so little account in their time, that what now we can scarce procure at any price, was then the furniture of the nursery or stall *. In fifty years after

“ *His* (says he) is ill syntax with *heaven*, and by *unfear'd* he means *unafraid*; words of a quite contrary signification.—He perpetually uses *ports* for *gates*, which is an affected error in him, to introduce Latin by the loss of the English idiom.”

Now *his* for *its*, however ill the syntax may be, was the common language of the time; and to *fear*, in the sense of to *terrify*, is found not only in all the poets, but in every dictionary of that age. With respect to *ports*, Shakspeare, who will not be suspected of affecting Latinisms, frequently employs that word in the same sense as Jonson has done, and as probably the whole kingdom did; for the word is still so used in Scotland.

D'Avenant's alteration of *Macbeth*, and *Measure for Measure*, furnish many proofs of the same kind. In *The Law against Lovers*, which he formed on *Much Ado about Nothing*, and *Measure for Measure*, are these lines:

“ ——— nor do I think,

“ The prince has *true* discretion who affects it.”

The passage imitated is in *Measure for Measure*:

“ Nor do I think the man of *safe* discretion,

“ That does affect it.”

If our poet's language had been well understood, the epithet *safe* would not have been rejected. So *Othello*:

“ My blood begins my *safer* guides to rule;

“ And passion, having my best judgment collied,” &c.

So also, *Edgar*, in *King Lear*:

“ The *safer* sense will ne'er accommodate

“ His master thus.”

* The price of books at different periods may serve in some measure to ascertain the taste and particular study of the age. At the sale of Dr. Francis Bernard's library in 1698, the following books were sold at the annexed prices:

FOLIO.

Gower de Confessione Amantis	0	2	6
Now sold for two guineas.			
Caxton's Recueyll of the Histories of Troy, 1502	0	3	0
——— Chronicle of England.....	0	4	0
Hall's Chronicle	0	6	4
Grafton's Chronicle	0	6	10
Holinshed's Chronicle, 1587.....	1	10	6

This book is now frequently sold for ten guineas.

our poet's death, Dryden mentions that he was then become "a little obsolete." In the beginning of the present century Lord Shaftesbury complains of his "rude unpolished stile, and his *antiquated* phrase and wit;" and not long afterwards Gildon informs us that he had been rejected from some modern collections of poetry on account of his *obsolete language*. Whence could these representations have proceeded, but because our poet not being diligently studied, not being compared with the contemporary writers, was not understood? If he had been "read, admired, studied, and imitated," in the same degree as he is now, the enthusiasm of some one or other of his admirers in the last age would have induced him to make some enquiries concerning the history of his theatrical career, and the anecdotes of his private life. But no such person was found; no anxiety in the publick sought out any particulars concerning him after the Restoration, (if we except the few which were collected by Mr. Aubrey,) though at that time the history of his life must have been known to many; for his sister Joan Hart, who must have known much of his early years, did not die till 1646: his favourite daughter, Mrs. Hall, lived till 1649; and his second daughter, Judith, was living at Stratford-upon-Avon in the beginning of the year 1662. His grand-daughter, Lady Barnard, did not die till 1670.

QUARTO.

Turberville on hawking and hunting	0	0	6
Copley's Wits, Fits, and Fancies.....	0	0	4
Puttenham's Art of English Poesie.....	0	0	4

This book is now usually sold for a guinea.

Powell's History of Wales	0	1	5
Painter's second tome of the Palace of Pleasure	0	0	4

The two volumes of Painter's Palace of Pleasure are now usually sold for three guineas.

OCTAVO.

Metamorphosis of Ajax, by Sir John Harrington	0	0	4
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[The prices of books have altered even since this note was written by Mr. Malone so much, that collectors would think themselves fortunate in procuring some of the works enumerated in the above list at three times the sum which is there considered as comparatively extravagant. BOSWELL.]

Mr. Thomas Combe, to whom Shakspeare bequeathed his sword, survived our poet above forty years, having died at Stratford in 1657. His elder brother, William Combe, lived till 1667. Sir Richard Bishop, who was born in 1585, lived at Bridgetown near Stratford till 1672; and his son, Sir William Bishop, who was born in 1626, died there in 1700. From all these persons without doubt many circumstances relative to Shakspeare might have been obtained; but that was an age as deficient in literary curiosity as in taste.

It is remarkable that in a century after our poet's death, five editions only of his plays were published; which probably consisted of not more than three thousand copies. During the same period three editions of the plays of Fletcher, and four of those of Jonson had appeared. On the other hand, from the year 1716 to the present time, that is, in seventy-four years, but two editions of the former writer, and one of the latter, have been issued from the press; while above thirty thousand copies of Shakspeare have been dispersed through England*. That nearly as many editions of the works of Jonson as of Shakspeare should have been demanded in the last century, will not appear surprising, when we recollect what Dryden has related soon after the Restoration: that "others were then generally preferred before him.†"

* Notwithstanding our high admiration of Shakspeare, we are yet without a splendid edition of his works, with the illustrations which the united efforts of various commentators have contributed; while in other countries the most brilliant decorations have been lavished on their distinguished poets. The editions of Pope and Hanmer, may, with almost as much propriety, be called *their* works, as those of Shakspeare; and therefore can have no claim to be admitted into any elegant library. Nor will the promised edition, with engravings, undertaken by Mr. Alderman Boydell, remedy this defect, for it is not to be accompanied with notes. At some future, and no very distant, time, I mean to furnish the publick with an elegant edition in quarto, (without engravings,) in which the text of the present edition shall be followed, with the illustrations subjoined in the same page.

† In the year 1642, whether from some capricious vicissitude in the publick taste, or from a general inattention to the drama, we find Shirley complaining that few came to see our author's performances:

By *others* Jonson and Fletcher were meant. To attempt to show to the readers of the present day the absurdity of

“ ————— You see

“ What audience we have : *what company*

“ *To Shakspeare comes ?* whose mirth did once beguile

“ Dull hours, and buskin'd made even sorrow smile ;

“ So lovely were the wounds, that men would say

“ They could endure the bleeding a whole day ;

“ *He has but few friends lately.*”

Prologue to The Sisters.

“ Shakspeare to thee was dull, whose best jest lies

“ I'th lady's questions, and the fool's replies ;

“ Old fashion'd wit, which walk'd from town to town,

“ In trunk-hose, which our fathers call'd the clown ;

“ Whose wit our nicer times would obscenity call,

“ And which made bawdry pass for comical.

“ Nature was all his art ; thy vein was free

“ As his, but without his scurrility.”

Verses on Fletcher, by William Cartwright, 1647.

After the Restoration, on the revival of the theatres, the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher were esteemed so much superior to those of our author, that we are told by Dryden, “ two of their pieces were acted through the year, for one of Shakspeare's.” If his testimony needed any corroboration, the following verses would afford it :

“ In our old plays, the humour, love, and passion,

“ Like doublet, hose, and cloak, are out of fashion ;

“ That which the world call'd wit in Shakspeare's age,

“ Is laugh'd at, as improper for our stage.”

Prologue to Shirley's Love Tricks, 1667.

“ At every shop, while Shakspeare's lofty stile

“ Neglected lies, to mice and worms a spoil,

“ Gilt on the back, just smoking from the press,

“ The apprentice shews you D'Urfey's Hudibras,

“ Crown's Mask, bound up with Settle's choicest labours,

“ And promises some new essay of Babor's.”

Satire, published in 1680.

“ — against old as well as new to rage,

“ Is the peculiar frenzy of this age.

“ Shakspeare must down, and you must praise no more,

“ Soft Desdemona, nor the jealous Moor :

“ Shakspeare, whose frightful genius, happy wit,

“ Was fram'd and finish'd at a lucky hit,

“ The pride of nature, and the shame of schools,

such a preference, would be an insult to their understandings. When we endeavour to trace any thing like a ground for this preposterous taste, we are told of Fletcher's *ease*, and Jonson's *learning*. Of how little use his learning was to him, an ingenious writer of our own time has shown with that vigour and animation for which he was distinguished. "Jonson, in the serious drama, is as much an imitator, as Shakspeare is an original. He was very learned, as Sampson was very strong, to his own hurt. Blind to the nature of tragedy, he pulled down all antiquity on his head, and buried himself under it. We see nothing of Jonson, nor indeed of his admired (but also murdered) ancients; for what shone in the historian is a cloud on the poet, and Catiline might have been a good play, if Sallust had never written.

"Who knows whether Shakspeare might not have thought less, if he had read more? Who knows if he might not have laboured under the load of Jonson's learning, as Enceladus under *Ætna*? His mighty genius, indeed, through the most mountainous oppression would have breathed out some of his inextinguishable fire; yet possibly he might not have risen up into that giant, that much more than common man, at which we now gaze with amazement and delight. Perhaps he was as learned as his dramattick province required; for whatever other learning he wanted, he was master of two books unknown to many of the profoundly read, though books which the last conflagration alone can destroy; the book of nature, and that of man.*"

To this and the other encomiums on our great poet which will be found in the following pages, I shall not attempt to make any addition. He has justly observed, that

"Born to create, and not to learn from, rules,
 "Must please no more: his bastards now deride
 "Their father's nakedness they ought to hide."

Prologue by Sir Charles Sedley, to the Wary Widow,
 1693.

To the honour of Margaret Duchess of Newcastle be it remembered, that however fantastick in other respects, she had taste enough to be fully sensible of our poet's merit, and was one of the first who after the Restoration published a very high eulogy on him. See her *Sociable Letters*, folio, 1664, p. 244.

* Conjectures on Original Composition, by Dr. Edward Young.

“ To guard a title that was rich before,
“ To gild refined gold, to paint the lily,
“ To throw a perfume on the violet,
“ To smooth the ice, or add another hue
“ Unto the rainbow, or with taper-light
“ To seek the beauteous eye of heaven to garnish,
“ Is wasteful and ridiculous excess.”

Let me, however, be permitted to remark, that beside all his other transcendent merits, he was the great refiner and polisher of our language. His compound epithets, his bold metaphors, the energy of his expressions, the harmony of his numbers, all these render the language of Shakspeare one of his principal beauties. Unfortunately none of his letters, or other prose compositions, not in a dramatick form, have reached posterity; but if any of them ever shall be discovered, they will, I am confident, exhibit the same perspicuity, the same cadence, the same elegance and vigour, which we find in his plays. “ Words and phrases,” says Dryden, “ must of necessity receive a change in succeeding ages; but it is almost a miracle, that much of his language remains so pure; and that he who began dramatick poetry amongst us, untaught by any, and, as Ben Jonson tells us, without learning, should by the force of his own genius perform so much, that in a manner he has left no praise for any who come after him.”

In these prefatory observations my principal object was, to ascertain the true state and respective value of the ancient copies, and to mark out the course which has been pursued in the edition now offered to the publick. It only remains, that I should return my very sincere acknowledgements to those gentlemen, to whose good offices I have been indebted in the progress of my work. My thanks are particularly due to Francis Ingram, of Ribbissford in Worcestershire, Esq. for the very valuable Office-book of Sir Henry Herbert, and several other curious papers, which formerly belonged to that gentleman; to Penn Asheton Curzon, Esq. for the use of the very rare copy of King Richard III. printed in 1597; to the Master, and the Rev. Mr. Smith, librarian, of Dulwich College, for the Manuscripts relative to one of our ancient theatres, which they obligingly transmitted to me; to John Kipling, Esq. keeper of the rolls in Chancery, who in the most liberal manner directed every search to be made in

the Chapel of the Rolls that I should require, with a view to illustrate the history of our poet's life; and to Mr. Richard Clarke, registrar of the diocese of Worcester, who with equal liberality, at my request, made many searches in his office for the wills of various persons. I am also in a particular manner indebted to the kindness and attention of the Rev. Mr. Davenport, vicar of Stratford-upon-Avon, who most obligingly made every inquiry in that town and the neighbourhood, which I suggested as likely to throw any light on the life of Shakspeare.

I deliver my book to the world not without anxiety; conscious, however, that I have strenuously endeavoured to render it not unworthy the attention of the publick. If the researches which have been made for the illustration of our poet's works, and for the dissertations which accompany the present edition, shall afford as much entertainment to others, as I have derived from them, I shall consider the time expended on it as well employed. Of the dangerous ground on which I tread, I am fully sensible. "*Multa sunt in his studiis (to use the words of a venerable fellow-labourer* in the mines of Antiquity) cineri supposita doloso. Errata possint esse multa à memoria. Quis enim in memoriæ thesauro omnia simul sic complectatur, ut pro arbitrato suo possit expromere? Errata possint esse plura ab imperitia. Quis enim tam peritus, ut in cæco hoc antiquitatis mari, cum tempore colluctatus, scopulis non allidatur? Hæc tamen à te, humanissime lector, tua humanitas, mea industria, patriæ charitas, et SHAKSPEARI dignitas, mihi exorent, ut quid mei sit judicii, sine aliorum præjudicio libere proferam; ut eâdem via qua alii in his studiis solent, insistam; et ut erratis, si ego agnoscam, tu ignoscas.*" Those who are the warmest admirers of our great poet, and most conversant with his writings, best know the difficulty of such a work, and will be most ready to pardon its defects; remembering, that in all arduous undertakings, it is easier to conceive than to accomplish; that "the will is infinite, and the execution confined; that the desire is boundless, and the act a slave to limit." MALONE.

Queen Anne Street, East,
October 25, 1790.

* Camden.

ADVERTISEMENT

PREFIXED TO EDITION 1793.

THE reader may observe that, contrary to former usage, no head of Shakspeare is prefixed to the present edition of his plays. The undisguised fact is this. The only portrait of him that even pretends to authenticity, by means of injudicious cleaning, or some other accident, has become little better than the “shadow of a shade.*” The late Sir Joshua Reynolds indeed once suggested, that whatever person it was designed for, it might have been left, as it now appears, unfinished. Various copies and plates, however, are said at different times to have been made from it; but a regard for truth obliges us to confess that they are all unlike each other †, and convey no distinct resemblance of the poor remains of their avowed

* Such, we think, were the remarks, that occurred to us several years ago, when this portrait was accessible. We wished indeed to have confirmed them by a second view of it; but a late accident in the noble family to which it belongs, has precluded us from that satisfaction.

† Vertue’s portraits have been over-praised on account of their fidelity; for we have now before us six different heads of Shakspeare engraved by him, and do not scruple to assert that they have individually a different cast of countenance. *Cucullus non facit monachum*. The shape of our author’s ear-ring and falling-band may correspond in them all, but where shall we find an equal conformity in his features?

Few objects indeed are occasionally more difficult to seize, than the slender traits that mark the character of a face; and the eye will often detect the want of them, when the most exact mechanical process cannot decide on the places in which they are omitted.—Vertue, in short, though a laborious, was a very indifferent draughtsman, and his best copies too often exhibit a general instead of a particular resemblance.

original. Of the drapery and curling hair exhibited in the excellent engravings of Mr. Vertue. Mr. Hall, and Mr. Knight, the painting does not afford a vestige; nor is there a feature or circumstance on the whole canvass, that can with minute precision be delineated.—We must add, that on very vague and dubious authority this head has hitherto been received as a genuine portrait of our author, who probably left behind him no such memorial of his face. As he was careless of the future state of his works, his solicitude might not have extended to the perpetuation of his looks. Had any portrait of him existed, we may naturally suppose it must have belonged to his family, who (as Mark Antony says of a hair of Cæsar) would

“ ——— have mention'd it within their wills,
 “ Bequeathing it as a rich legacy
 “ Unto their issue ;”

and were the ground for the report that Shakspeare was the real father of Sir William D'Avenant, and that the picture already spoken of was painted for him, we might be tempted to observe with our author, that the

“ ————— bastard son
 “ Was kinder to his father, than his daughters
 “ Got 'twixt the natural sheets.”

But in support of either supposition sufficient evidence has not been produced. The former of these tales has no better foundation than the vanity of our *degener Neoptolemus**, and the latter originates from modern con-

* Nor does the same piece of ancient scandal derive much weight from Aubrey's adoption of it. The reader who is acquainted with the writings of this absurd gossip, will scarcely pay more attention to him on the present occasion, than when he gravely assures us that “ Anno 1670, not far from Cirencester was an apparition; being demanded whether a good spirit or a bad? returned no answer, bnt disappeared *with a curious perfume and most melodious twang*. Mr. W. Lilly believes it was a fairy.” See Aubrey's *Miscellanies*, edit. 1784, p. 114.—Aubrey, in short, was a dupe to every wag who chose to practise on his credulity; and would most certainly have believed the person who should have told him that Shakspeare himself was a natural son of Queen Elizabeth.

An additional and no less pleasant proof of Aubrey's cullibility, may be found at the conclusion of one of his own Letters to Mr.

jecture. The present age will probably allow the vintner's ivy to Sir William, but with equal justice will withhold from him the poet's bays.—To his pretensions of descent from Shakspeare, one might almost be induced to apply a ludicrous passage uttered by Fielding's "Phaeton in the Suds:"

"————— by all the parish boys I'm flamm'd:

"You the *SUN'S son*, you rascal! you be d——d."

About the time when this picture found its way into Mr. Keck's hands, the verification of portraits was so little attended to, that both the Earl of Oxford, and Mr. Pope, admitted a juvenile one of King James I. as that of Shakspeare *. Among the heads of illustrious persons

Ray; where, after the enumeration of several wonderful methods employed by old women and Irishmen to cure the gout, agues, and the bloody flux, he adds: "Sir Christopher Wren told me once [eating of strawberries] that if one that has a wound in the head eats them, 'tis mortal."

See Philosophical Letters between the late learned Mr. Ray, &c. Published by William Derham, Chaplain to his Royal Highness George Prince of Wales, and F.R.S. 8vo. 1718, p. 251.

In the foregoing instance our letter-writer seems to have been perfectly unconscious of the jocularly of Sir Christopher, who would have meant nothing more by his remark, than to secure his strawberries, at the expence of an allusion to the crack in poor Aubrey's head. Thus when Falstaff "did desire to eat some prawns," Mrs. Quickly told him "they were ill for a green wound."

Mr. T. Warton has pleasantly observed that he "cannot suppose Shakspeare to have been the father of a Doctor of Divinity who never laughed;" and—to waste no more words on Sir William D'Avenant,—let but our readers survey his heavy, vulgar, unmeaning face, and, if we mistake not, they will as readily conclude that Shakspeare "never help to make it." So despicable, indeed, is his countenance as represented by Faithorne, that it appears to have sunk that celebrated engraver beneath many a common artist in the same line.

* Much respect is due to the authority of portraits that descend in families from heir to heir; but little reliance can be placed on them when they are produced for sale (as in the present instance) by alien hands, almost a century after the death of the person supposed to be represented; and then, (as Edmund says in King Lear) "come pat, like the catastrophe of the old comedy." Shakspeare was buried in 1616; and in 1708 the

engraved by Houbraken, are several imaginary ones, beside Ben Jonson's and Otway's; and old Mr. Langford positively asserted that, in the same collection, the grandfather of Cock the auctioneer had the honour to personate the great and amiable Thurloe, secretary of state to Oliver Cromwell.

From the price of forty guineas paid for the supposed portrait of our author to Mrs. Barry, the real value of it should not be inferred. The possession of somewhat more animated than canvas, might have been included, though not specified, in a bargain with an actress of acknowledged gallantry.

Yet allowing this to be a mere fanciful insinuation, a rich man does not easily miss what he is ambitious to find. At least he may be persuaded he has found it, a circumstance which, as far as it affects his own content, will answer, for a while, the same purpose. Thus the late Mr. Jennens, of Gopsal in Leicestershire, for many years congratulated himself as owner of another genuine portrait of Shakspeare, and by Cornelius Jansen; nor was disposed to forgive the writer who observed that, being dated in 1610, it could not have been the work of an artist who never saw England till 1618, above a year after our author's death.

So ready, however, are interested people in assisting credulous ones to impose on themselves, that we will venture to predict,—if some opulent dupe to the flimsy artifice of Chatterton should advertise a considerable sum of money for a portrait of the Pseudo-Rowley, such a desideratum would soon emerge from the tutelary crypts of St. Mary Redcliff at Bristol, or a hitherto unheard of repository in the tomb of Syr Thybbot Gorges at Wraxall*. It would also come attested as a strong likeness

first notice of this picture occurs. Where there is such a chasm in evidence, the validity of it may be not unfairly questioned, and especially by those who remember a species of fraudulence recorded in Mr. Foote's Taste: "Clap Lord Dupe's arms on that half-length of Erasmus; I have sold it him as his great grandfather's third brother, for fifty guineas."

* A kindred trick had actually been passed off by Chatterton on the late Mr. Barrett of Bristol, in whose back parlour was a pretended head of Canynge, most contemptibly scratched with a pen on a small square piece of yellow parchment, and framed and glazed as an authentick icon by the "curious poyntill" of

of our archæological bard, on the faith of a parchment exhibiting the hand and seal of the “dygne Mayster Wylyyam Canynge,” setting forth that “Mayster Thomas Rowlie was so entyrelly and passynge wele belovyd of himself, or our poetick knight, that one or the other causyd hys semblaunce to be ryght conynglye depeyncten on a marveillouse fayre table of wood, and ensevelyd wyth hym, that deth mote theym not clene departyn and putte asunder.”—A similar imposition, however, would in vain be attempted on the editors of Shakspeare, who, with all the zeal of Rowleians, are happily exempt from their credulity.

A former plate of our author, which was copied from Martin Droeshout’s in the title page to the folio 1623, is worn out; nor does so “abominable an imitation of humanity” deserve to be restored. The smaller head, prefixed to the Poems in 1640, is merely a reduced and reversed copy by Marshall from its predecessor, with a few slight changes in attitude and dress.—We boast therefore of no exterior ornaments*, except those of better print and paper than have hitherto been allotted to any octavo edition of Shakspeare.

Justice nevertheless requires us to subjoin, that had an undoubted picture of our author been attainable, the Booksellers would most readily have paid for the best

Rowley. But this same drawing very soon ceased to be stationary, was alternately exhibited and concealed, as the wavering faith of its possessor shifted about, and was prudently withheld at last from the publick eye. Why it was not inserted in the late History of Bristol, as well as Rowley’s plan and elevation of its ancient castle, (which all the rules of all the ages of architecture pronounce to be spurious) let the Rowleian advocates inform us. We are happy at least to have recollected a single imposition that was too gross for even these gentlemen to swallow.—Mr. Barrett, however, in the year 1776, assured Mr. Tyrwhitt and Mr. Steevens, that he received the aforesaid scrawl of Canynge from Chatterton, who described it as having been found in the prolifick chest, secured by six, or six-and-twenty keys, no matter which.

* They who wish for decorations adapted to this edition of Shakspeare, will find them in Silvester Harding’s Portraits and Views, &c. &c. (appropriated to the whole suite of our author’s Historical Dramas, &c.) published in thirty numbers.

See Gent. Mag. June 1759, p. 257.

engraving from it that could have been produced by the most skilful of our modern artists; but it is idle to be at the charge of perpetuating illusions: and who shall offer to point out, among the numerous prints of Shakspeare, any one that is more like him than the rest?*

The play of Pericles has been added to this collection, by the advice of Dr. Farmer. To make room for it, Titus Adronicus might have been omitted; but our proprietors are of opinion that some ancient prejudices in its favour may still exist, and for that reason only it is preserved.

We have not reprinted the Sonnets, &c. of Shakspeare, because the strongest act of parliament that could be framed would fail to compel readers into their service; notwithstanding these miscellaneous poems have derived every possible advantage from the literature and judgment of their only intelligent editor, Mr. Malone, whose implements of criticism, like the ivory rake and golden spade in Prudentius, are on this occasion disgraced by the objects of their culture.—Had Shakspeare produced no other works than these, his name would have reached us with as little celebrity as time has conferred on that of Thomas Watson, an older and much more elegant sonneteer†.

* List of the different engravings from the Chandosan Shakspeare:

By Vandergucht, to Rowe's edit.	1709
Vertue, half sheet, Set of Poets	1719
Do. small oval, Jacob's Lives	1719
Do. to Warburton's 8vo.	1747
Duchange, 8vo. to Theobald's	1733
Gravelot, half sheet, Hanmer's edit.	1744
Houbraken, half sheet, Birch's Heads.	1747
Millar, small oval, Capell's Shakspeare	1766
Hall, 8vo. Reed's edit.	1785
Cook, 8vo. Bell's edit.	1788
Knight, 8vo. Mr. Malone's edit.	1790
Harding, 8vo. Set of Prints to Shakspeare	1793

No two of these Portraits are alike; nor does any one of them bear the slightest resemblance to its wretched original. G. S.

† His Sonnets, though printed without date, were entered in the year 1581, on the books of the Stationers' Company, under the title of "Watson's Passions, manifesting the true Frenzy of Love."

What remains to be added concerning this republication is, that a considerable number of fresh remarks are both adopted and supplied by the present editors. They have persisted in their former track of reading for the illustration of their author, and cannot help observing that those who receive the benefit of explanatory extracts from ancient writers, little know at what expence of time and labour such atoms of intelligence have been collected.—That the foregoing information, however, may communicate no alarm, or induce the reader to suppose we have “bestowed our whole tediousness” on him, we should add, that many notes have likewise been withdrawn. A few, manifestly erroneous, are indeed retained, to show how much the tone of Shakspearian criticism is changed, or on account of the skill displayed in their confutation; for surely every editor in his turn is occasionally entitled to be seen, as he would have shown himself, with his vanquished adversary at his feet. We have therefore been sometimes willing to “bring a corollary, rather than want a spirit.” Nor, to confess the truth, did we always think it justifiable to shrink our predecessors to pigmies, that we ourselves, by force of comparison, might assume the bulk of giants.

The present editors must also acknowledge, that unless in particular instances, where the voice of the publick had decided against the remarks of Dr. Johnson, they have hesitated to displace them; and had rather be charged with a superstitious reverence for his name, than censured for a presumptuous disregard of his opinions.

As a large proportion of Mr. Monck Mason’s strictures on a former edition of Shakspeare are here inserted, it has been thought necessary that as much of his Preface as was designed to introduce them, should accompany their second appearance. Any formal recommendation of them

Shakspeare appears to have been among the number of his readers, having in the following passage of *Venus and Adonis*,—

“Leading him prisoner *in a red-rose chain*,”

borrowed an idea from his 83d Sonnet:

“The Muses not long since intrapping love

“*In chaines of roses*,” &c.

Watson, however, declares on this occasion thst he imitated Ronsard; and it must be confessed, with equal truth, that in the present instance Ronsard had been a borrower from Anacreon.

is needless, as their own merit is sure to rank their author among the most diligent and sagacious of our celebrated poet's annotators.

It may be proper, indeed, to observe, that a few of these remarks are omitted, because they had been anticipated; and that a few others have excluded themselves by their own immoderate length; for he who publishes a series of comments unattended by the text of his author, is apt to "overflow the measure" allotted to marginal criticism. In these cases, either the commentator or the poet must give way, and no reader will patiently endure to see "Alcides beaten by his page."—*Inferior volat umbra deo.*—Mr. M. Mason will also forgive us if we add, that a small number of his proposed amendments are suppressed through honest commiseration. "'Tis much he dares, and he has a wisdom that often guides his valour to act in safety:" yet occasionally he forgets the prudence that should attend conjecture, and therefore, in a few instances, would have been produced only to have been persecuted.—May it be subjoined, that the freedom with which the same gentleman has treated the notes of others, seems to have authorized an equal degree of licence respecting his own? And yet, though the sword may have been drawn against him, he shall not complain that its point is "unbated and envenomed;" for the conductors of this undertaking do not scruple thus openly to express their wishes that it may have merit enough to provoke a revision from the acknowledged learning and perspicacity of their Hibernian coadjutor.—Every re-impression of our great dramattick master's works must be considered in some degree as experimental; for their corruptions and obscurities are still so numerous, and the progress of fortunate conjecture so tardy and uncertain, that our remote descendants may be perplexed by passages that have perplexed us; and the readings which have hitherto disunited the opinions of the learned, may continue to disunite them as long as England and Shakspeare have a name. In short, the peculiarity once ascribed to the poetick isle of Delos*, may be exemplified in our author's text, which, on account of readings alternately received and reprobated, must remain in an unsettled state, and float in obedience

* — nec instabili famâ superabere Delo.

Stat. Achill. I. 388.

to every gale of contradictory criticism.—Could a perfect and decisive edition of the following scenes be produced, it were to be expected only (though we fear in vain) from the hand of Dr. Farmer*, whose more serious avocations forbid him to undertake what every reader would delight to possess.

But as we are often reminded by our “brethren of the craft,” that this or that emendation, however apparently necessary, is not the *genuine text of Shakspeare*, it might be imagined that we had received this text from its fountain head, and were therefore certain of its purity. Whereas few literary occurrences are better understood, than that it came down to us discoloured by “the variation of every soil” through which it had flowed, and that it stagnated at last in the muddy reservoir of the first folio*. In plainer terms, that the vitiations of a careless theatre were seconded by those of as ignorant a press. The integrity of dramas thus prepared for the world, is just on a level with the innocence of females nursed in a camp and educated in a bagnio.—As often therefore as we are told, that by admitting corrections warranted by common sense and the laws of metre, we have not rigidly adhered to the text of Shakspeare, we shall intreat our opponents to exchange that phrase for another “more germane,” and say instead of it, that we have deviated from the text of the publishers of single plays in quarto, or their successors, the editors of the first folio; that we have sometimes followed the

* He died September 8th, 1797.

† It will perhaps be urged, that to this first folio we are indebted for the only copies of sixteen or seventeen of our author’s plays: True: but may not our want of yet earlier and less corrupted editions of these very dramas be solely attributed to the monopolizing vigilance of its editors, Messieurs Hemings and Condell? Finding they had been deprived of some tragedies and comedies which, when opportunity offered, they designed to publish for their own emolument, they redoubled their solicitude to withhold the rest, and were but too successful in their precaution. “Thank fortune (says the original putterforth of *Troilus and Cressida*) for the scape it hath made amongst you; since by the *grand possessors’* wills, I believe, you should have pray’d for it, rather than beene pray’d.”—Had quartos of *Macbeth*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *All’s Well that Ends Well*, &c. been sent into the world, from how many corruptions might the text of all these dramas have been secured!

suggestions of a Warburton, a Johnson, a Farmer, or a Tyrwhitt, in preference to the decisions of a Hemings or a Condell, notwithstanding their choice of readings might have been influenced by associates whose high-sounding names cannot fail to enforce respect, viz. William Ostler, John Shanke, William Sly, and Thomas Poope*.

To revive the anomalies, barbarisms and blunders of some ancient copies, in preference to the corrections of others almost equally old, is likewise a circumstance by no means honourable to our author, however secure respecting ourselves. For what is it, under pretence of restoration, but to use him as he has used the Tinker in *The Taming of a Shrew*,—to re-clothe him in his pristine rags? To assemble parallels in support of all these deformities, is no insuperable labour; for if we are permitted to avail ourselves of every typographical mistake, and every provincial vulgarism and offence against established grammar, that may be met with in the coëval productions of irregular humourists and ignorant sectaries and buffoons, we may aver that every casual combination of syllables may be tortured into meaning, and every species of corruption exemplified by corresponding depravities of language: but not of such language as Shakspeare, if compared with himself where he is perfect, can be supposed to have written. By similar reference it is that the style of many an ancient building has been characteristically restored. The members of architecture left entire, have instructed the renovator how to supply the loss of such as had fallen into decay. The poet, therefore, whose dialogue has often, during a long and uninterrupted series of lines, no other peculiarities than were common to the works of his most celebrated contemporaries, and whose general ease and sweetness of versification are hitherto unrivalled, ought not so often to be suspected of having produced ungrammatical nonsense, and such rough and defective numbers as would disgrace a village school-boy in his first attempts at English poetry.—It may also be observed, that our author's earliest compositions, his Sonnets, &c. are wholly free from metrical imperfections.

The truth is, that from one extreme we have reached another. Our incautious predecessors, Rowe, Pope, Hanmer, and Warburton, were sometimes justly blamed

* See first folio, &c. for the list of actors in our author's plays.

for wanton and needless deviations from ancient copies; and we are afraid that censure will as equitably fall on some of us, for a revival of irregularities which have no reasonable sanction, and few champions but such as are excited by a fruitless ambition to defend certain posts and passes that had been supposed untenable. The "wine of collation," indeed, had long been "drawn," and little beside the "mere lees was left" for very modern editors "to brag of." It should, therefore, be remembered, that as judgment, without the aid of collation, might have insufficient materials to work on, so collation, divested of judgment, will be often worse than thrown away, because it introduces obscurity instead of light. To render Shakspeare less intelligible by the recall of corrupt phraseology, is not, in our opinion, the surest way to extend his fame and multiply his readers; unless (like Curll the bookseller, when the Jews spoke Hebrew to him,) they happen to have most faith in what they least understand. Respecting our author, therefore, on some occasions, we cannot join in the prayer of Cordelia:—

"————— *Restoration* hang
" Thy medicine on his lips!"

It is unlucky for him, perhaps, that between the interest of his readers and his editors a material difference should subsist. The former wish to meet with as few difficulties as possible, while the latter are tempted to seek them out, because they afford opportunities for explanatory criticism.

Omissions in our author's works are frequently suspected, and sometimes not without sufficient reason. Yet, in our opinion, they have suffered a more certain injury from interpolation; for almost as often as their measure is deranged, or redundant, some words, alike unnecessary to sense and the grammar of the age, may be discovered, and, in a thousand instances, might be expunged, without loss of a single idea meant to be expressed; a liberty which we have sometimes taken, though not (as it is hoped) without constant notice of it to the reader. Enough of this, however, has been already attempted, to show that more on the same plan might be done with safety*.

* Sufficient instances of measure thus rendered defective, and in the present edition unamended, may be found in the three last

—So far from understanding the power of an ellipsis, we may venture to affirm that the very name of this figure in rhetorick never reached the ears of our ancient editors. Having on this subject the support of Dr. Farmer's acknowledged judgment and experience, we shall not shrink from controversy with those who maintain a different opinion, and refuse to acquiesce in modern suggestions if opposed to the authority of quartos and folios, consigned to us by a set of people who were wholly uninstructed in the common forms of style, orthography, and punctuation. —We do not therefore hesitate to affirm, that a blind fidelity to the eldest printed copies, is on some occasions a confirmed treason against the sense, spirit, and versification of Shakspeare.

All these circumstances considered, it is time, instead of a timid and servile adherence to ancient copies, when (offending against sense and metre) they furnish no real help, that a future editor, well acquainted with the phraseology of our author's age, should be at liberty to restore some apparent meaning to his corrupted lines, and a decent flow to his obstructed versification. The latter (as already has been observed) may be frequently effected by the expulsion of useless and supernumerary syllables, and an occasional supply of such as might fortuitously have been omitted, notwithstanding the declaration of Hemings and Condell, whose fraudulent preface asserts that they have published our author's plays "as absolute in their numbers as he conceived them." Till somewhat resembling the process above suggested be authorized, the publick will ask in vain for a commodious and pleasant text of Shakspeare. Nothing will be lost to the world on account of the measure recommended, there being folios and quartos enough remaining for the use of antiquarian or critical travellers, to whom a jolt over a rugged pavement may be more delectable than an easy passage over a smooth one, though they both conduct to the same object.

To a reader unacquainted with the licenses of a theatre, the charge of more material interpolation than that of mere

Acts of Hamlet, and in Othello. The length of this prefatory advertisement has precluded their exemplification, which was here meant to have been given.—We wish, however, to impress the foregoing circumstance on the memory of the judicious reader.

syllables, will appear to want support; and yet whole lines and passages in the following plays incur a very just suspicion of having originated from this practice, which continues even in the present improved state of our dramatick arrangements; for the propensity of modern performers to alter words, and occasionally introduce ideas incongruous with their author's plan, will not always escape detection. In such vagaries our comedians have been much too frequently indulged; but to the injudicious tragical interpolator no degree of favour should be shown, not even to a late Matilda, who, in Mr. Home's *Douglas* thought fit to change the obscure intimation with which her part should have concluded—

“ ————— such a son,

“ And such a husband, *make a woman bold.*—

into a plain avowal, that

“ ————— such a son,

“ And such a husband, *drive me to my fate.*”

Here we perceive that Fate, the old post-horse of tragedy, has been saddled to expedite intelligence which was meant to be delayed till the necessary moment of its disclosure. Nay, further: the prompter's book being thus corrupted, on the first night of the revival of this beautiful and interesting play at Drury Lane, the same spurious nonsense was heard from the lips of Mrs. Siddons, lips, whose matchless powers should be sacred only to the task of animating the purest strains of dramatick poetry.—Many other instances of the same presumption might have been subjoined, had they not been withheld through tenderness to performers now upon the stage.—Similar interpolations, however, in the text of Shakspeare, can only be suspected, and therefore must remain unexpelled.

To other defects of our late editions may be subjoined, as not the least notorious, an exuberance of comment. Our situation has not unaptly resembled that of the fray in the first scene of *Romeo and Juliet*:

“ While we were interchanging thrusts and blows,

“ Came more and more, and fought on part and part:”

till, as Hamlet has observed, we are contending

“ ————— for a plot

“ Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause.”

Indulgence to the remarks of others, as well as partiality to our own; an ambition in each little Hercules to set up pillars, ascertaining how far he had travelled through the dreary wilds of black letter; and perhaps a reluctance or inability to decide between contradictory sentiments, have also occasioned the appearance of more annotations than were absolutely wanted, unless it be thought requisite that our author, like a Dauphin Classick, should be reduced to marginal prose for the use of children; that all his various readings (assembled by Mr. Capell) should be enumerated, the genealogies of all his real personages deduced; and that as many of his plays as are founded on Roman or British history, should be attended by complete transcripts from their originals in Sir Thomas North's Plutarch, or the Chronicles of Hall and Holinshed.—These faults, indeed,—*si quid prodest delicta fateri*,—within half a century, (when the present race of voluminous criticks is extinct) cannot fail to be remedied by a judicious and frugal selection from the labours of us all. Nor is such an event to be deprecated even by ourselves; since we may be certain that some ivy of each individual's growth will still adhere to the parent oak, though not enough, as at present, to “hide the princely trunk, and suck the verdure out of it*.”—It may be feared too, should we persist in similar accumulations of extraneous matter, that the readers will at length be frightened away from Shakspeare, as the soldiers of Cato deserted their comrade when he became bloated with poison—*crescens fugêre cadaver*. It is our opinion, in short, that every one who opens the page of an ancient English writer, should bring with him some knowledge; and yet he by whom a thousand minutiae remain to be learned, needs not to close our author's volume in despair, for his spirit and general drift are always obvious, though his language and allusions are occasionally obscure.

We may subjoin (alluding to our own practice as well as that of others) that they whose remarks are longest, and who seek the most frequent opportunities of introducing their names at the bottom of our author's pages are not, on that account, the most estimable criticks. The art of writing notes, as Dr. Johnson has pleasantly ob-

* Tempest.

served in his preface, is not of difficult attainment*. Additional hundreds might therefore be supplied ; for as often as a various reading, whether serviceable or not, is to be found, the discoverer can bestow an immediate reward on his own industry, by a display of his favourite signature. The same advantage may be gained by opportunities of appropriating to ourselves what was originally said by another person, and in another place.

Though our adoptions have been slightly mentioned already, our fourth impression of the Plays of Shakspeare must not issue into the world without particular and ample acknowledgements of the benefit it has derived from the labours of the last editor, whose attention, diligence, and spirit of enquiry, have very far exceeded those of the whole united phalanx of his predecessors.—His additions to our author's Life, his attempt to ascertain the Order in which his Plays were written, together with his Account of our ancient Stage, &c. are here re-published ; and every reader will concur in wishing that a gentleman who has produced such intelligent combinations from very few materials, had fortunately been possessed of more.

Of his notes on particular passages a great majority is here adopted. True it is, that on some points we fundamentally disagree ; for instance, concerning his metamorphosis of monosyllables (like *burn, sworn, worn, nere* and *there, arms, and charms,*) into dissyllables ; his contraction of dissyllables (like *neither, rather, reason, lover,* &c.) into monosyllables ; and his sentiments respecting the worth of the variations supplied by the second folio.—On the first of these contested matters we commit ourselves to the publick ear ; on the second we must awhile solicit the reader's attention.

The following conjectural account of the publication of this second folio (about which no certainty can be obtained) perhaps is not very remote from truth.

When the predecessor of it appeared, some intelligent friend or admirer of Shakspeare might have observed its defects, and corrected many of them in its margin, from early manuscripts† or authentick information.

That such manuscripts should have remained, can excite

* See also Addison's Spectator, No. 470.

† See Mr. Holt White's note on Romeo and Juliet, vol. vi. p. 90, n. 4.

no surprize. The good fortune that, till this present hour, has preserved the Chester and Coventry Mysteries, Tancred and Gismund * as originally written, the ancient play Timon, the Witch of Middleton, with several older as well as coëval dramas (exclusive of those in the Marquis of Lansdowne's library) might surely have befriended some of our author's copies in 1632, only sixteen years after his death.

That oral information concerning his works was still accessible, may with similar probability be inferred ; as some of the original and most knowing performers in his different pieces were then alive (Lowin and Taylor, for instance) ; and it must be certain, that on the stage they never uttered such mutilated lines and unintelligible nonsense as was afterwards incorporated with their respective parts, in both the first quarto and folio editions.

The folio therefore of 1623, corrected from one or both the authorities above mentioned, we conceive to have been the basis of its successor in 1632.

At the same time, however, a fresh and abundant series of errors and omissions was created in the text of our author ; the natural and certain consequence of every re-impression of a work which is not overseen by other eyes than those of its printer.

Nor is it at all improbable that the person who furnished the revision of the first folio, wrote a very obscure hand, and was much cramped for room, as the margin of this book is always narrow. Such being the case, he might often have been compelled to deal in abbreviations, which were sometimes imperfectly deciphered, and sometimes wholly misunderstood.

Mr. Malone, indeed, frequently points his artillery at a personage whom we cannot help regarding as a phantom ; we mean the Editor of the second folio ; for perhaps no such literary agent as an editor of a poetical work, unaccompanied by comments, was at that period to be found. This office, if any where, was vested in the printer, who transferred it to his compositors ; and these worthies discharged their part of the trust with a proportionate mixture of ignorance and inattention. We do not wish to soften our expression ; for some plays, like *The Misfor-*

* i. e. as acted before Queen Elizabeth in 1568. See Warton, *Hist. of Poet.* vol. iii. p. 376, n. g.

tunes of Arthur, and many books of superior consequence, like Fox's Martyrs, and the second edition of the Chronicles of Holinshed, &c. were carefully prepared for the publick eye by their immediate authors, or substitutes qualified for their undertaking.* But about the year 1600, the era of total incorrectness commenced, and works of almost all kinds appeared with the disadvantage of more than their natural and inherent imperfections.

Such too, in these more enlightened days, when few compositors are unskilled in orthography and punctuation, would be the event, were complicated works of fancy submitted to no other superintendence than their own. More attentive and judicious artists than were employed on our present edition of Shakspeare, are, I believe, no where to be found; and yet had their proofs escaped correction from an editor, the text of our author in many places would have been materially changed. And as all these changes would have originated from attention for a moment relaxed, interrupted memory, a too hasty glance at the page before them, and other incidental causes, they could not have been recommended in preference to the variations of the second folio, which in several instances have been justly reprobated by the last editor of Shakspeare. What errors then might not have been expected, when compositors were wholly unlettered and careless, and a corrector of the press an officer unknown? To him who is inclined to dispute our grounds for this last assertion, we would recommend a perusal of the errata at the ends of multitudes of our ancient publications, where the reader's indulgence is entreated for "faults escaped on account of the author's distance from the press;" faults, indeed, which could not have occurred, had every printing-office, as at present, been furnished with a regular and literary superintendant of its productions.—How then can it be expected that printers who were often found unequal to the task of setting forth even a plain prose narrative, consisting of a few sheets, without blunders innumerable, should have done justice to a folio volume of dramattick dialogues in metre, which required a so much greater degree of accuracy?

* Abraham Fleming supervised, corrected, and enlarged the second edition of Holinshed's Chronicle, in 1585.

But the worth of our contested volume also seems to be questioned, because the authority on which even such changes in it as are allowed to be judicious, is unknown. But if weight were granted to this argument, what support could be found for ancient Greek and Roman MSS. of various descriptions? The names of their transcribers are alike undiscovered; and yet their authority, when the readings they present are valuable, will seldom fail to be admitted.

Nay, further:—it is on all hands allowed, that what we style a younger and inferior MS. will occasionally correct the mistakes and supply the deficiencies of one of better note, and higher antiquity.—Why, therefore, should not a book printed in 1632 be allowed the merit of equal services to a predecessor in 1623?

Such also, let us add, were the sentiments of a gentleman whose name we cannot repeat without a sigh, which those who were acquainted with his value, will not suspect of insincerity: we mean our late excellent friend, Mr. Tyrwhitt. In his library was this second folio of our author's plays. He always stood forward as a determined advocate for its authority, on which, we believe, more than one of his emendations were formed. At least, we are certain that he never attempted any, before he had consulted it.

He was once, indeed, offered a large fragment of the first folio; but in a few days he returned it, with an assurance that he did not perceive any decided superiority it could boast over its immediate successor, as the metre, imperfect in the elder, was often restored to regularity in the junior impression.

Mr. Malone, however, in his Letter to Dr. Farmer, has styled these necessary corrections such "as could not escape a person of the most ordinary capacity, who had been one month conversant with a printing-house;" a description mortifying enough to the present editors, who, after an acquaintance of many years with typographical mysteries, would be loath to weigh their own amendments against those which this second folio, with all its blunders, has displayed.

The same gentleman also (see his Preface, p. 209) speaks with some confidence of having *proved* his assertions relative to the worthlessness of this book. But

how are these assertions proved? By exposing its errors (some of which nevertheless are of a very questionable shape) and by observing a careful silence about its deserts.* The latter surely should have been stated as well as the former. Otherwise, this proof will resemble the "ill-roasted egg" in *As You Like It*, which was done "only on one side."—If, in the mean time, some critical arithmetician can be found, who will impartially and intelligently ascertain by way of D^r and C^r the faults and merits of this book, and thereby prove the former to have been many, and the latter scarce any at all, we will most openly acknowledge our misapprehension, and subscribe (a circumstance of which we need not be ashamed) to the superior sagacity and judgment of Mr. Malone.

To conclude, though we are far from asserting that this republication, generally considered, is preferable to its original, we must still regard it as a valuable supplement to that work; and no stronger plea in its favour can be advanced, than the frequent use made of it by Mr. Malone. The numerous corrections from it admitted by that gentleman into his text,* and pointed out

* Thus (as one instance out of several that might be produced) when Mr. Malone, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, very judiciously restores the uncommon word—*ging*, and supports it by instances from *The New Inn* and *The Alchemist*, he forbears to mention that such also is the reading of the *second*, though *not* of the *first* folio. See vol. viii. p. 153, n. 5.

† Amounting to (as we are informed by a very accurate compositor who undertook to count them) 186.

Instances wherein Mr. Malone has admitted the Corrections of the Second Folio.

Tempest	4
Two Gentlemen of Verona.....	10
Merry Wives of Windsor	5
Measure for Measure	15
Comedy of Errors	11
Much Ado about Nothing	0
Love's Labour's Lost	13
Midsummer-Night's Dream	4
Merchant of Venice	2
As You Like It	15
Taming of the Shrew.....	16
All's Well that Ends Well	6
Twelfth-Night	3

in his notes, will, in our judgment, contribute to its eulogium: at least cannot fail to rescue it from his prefatory imputations of "being of no value whatever," and afterwards of—"not being worth—three shillings*." See Mr. Malone's Preface, and List of Editions of Shakspeare.

Winter's Tale	8
Macbeth	6
King John	3
King Richard II.	1
King Henry IV. Part I.	1
II.	1
King Henry V.	7
King Henry VI. Part I.	6
II.	6
III.	2
King Richard III.	0
King Henry VIII.	6
Coriolanus	0
Julius Cæsar.	2
Antony and Cleopatra.	7
Timon of Athens	6
Troilus and Cressida	0
Cymbeline	10
King Lear	3
Romeo and Juliet	4
Hamlet	3
Othello	0
<hr/>	
Total.....	186

 PLYMSELL.

* This doctrine, however, appears to have made few proselytes: at least, some late catalogues of our good friends the booksellers, have expressed their dissent from it in terms of uncommon force. I must add, that on the 34th day of the auction of the late Dr. Farmer's library, this proscribed volume was sold for *three guineas*; and that in the sale of Mr. Allen's library, April 15th, 1799, at Leigh and Sotheby's, York Street, Covent Garden, the four folio editions of our author's plays were disposed of at the following prices:

Sale No.	l.	s.	d.
1460 1st folio.	40	19	0
61 2d do.	5	10	0
62 3d do.	5	15	6
63 4th do.	3	13	6

Our readers, it is hoped, will so far honour us as to observe, that the foregoing opinions were not suggested and defended through an ambitious spirit of contradiction. Mr. Malone's Preface, indeed, will absolve us from that censure; for he allows them to be of a date previous to his own edition. He, therefore, on this subject, is the assailant, and not the conductors of the present republication.

But though, in the course of succeeding strictures, several other of Mr. Malone's positions may be likewise controverted, some with seriousness, and some with levity, (for our discussions are not of quite so solemn a turn as those which involve the interests of our country,) we feel an undissembled pleasure in avowing, that his remarks are at once so numerous and correct, that when criticism "has done its worst," their merit but in a small degree can be affected. We are confident, however, that he himself will hereafter join with us in considering no small proportion of our contested readings as a mere game at literary push-pin; and that if Shakspeare looks down upon our petty squabbles over his mangled scenes, it must be with feelings similar to those of Lucan's hero:

— ridetque sui ludibria trunci.

In the Preface of Mr. Malone, indeed, a direct censure has been levelled at incorrectness in the text of the edition 1778. The justice of the imputation is unequivocally allowed; but, at the same time, might not this acknowledgement be seconded by somewhat like a retort? For is it certain that the collations, &c. of 1790 are wholly secure from similar charges? Are they accompanied by no unauthorized readings, no omission of words, and transpositions? Through all the plays, and especially those of which there is only a single copy, they have been with some diligence retraced, and the frailties of their collator, such as they are, have been ascertained. They shall not, however, be ostentatiously pointed out, and for this only reason:—That as they decrease but little, if at all, the vigour of Shakspeare, the critick who in general has performed with accuracy one of the heaviest of literary tasks, ought not to be molested by a display of petty faults, which might have eluded the most vigilant faculties of sight and hearing that were ever placed as spies over the labours of each other. They are not

even mentioned here as a covert mode of attack, or as a “note of preparation” for future hostilities. The office of “devising brave punishments” for faithless editors, is therefore strenuously declined, even though their guilt should equal that of one of their number, (Mr. Steevens,) who stands convicted of having given *winds* instead of *wind*, *stables* instead of *stable*, *sessions* instead of *session*, *sins* instead of *sin*, and (we shudder while we recite the accusation) *my* instead of *mine* *.

“ ————— Such small deer
“ Have been our food for many a year ; ”

so long, in truth, that any further pursuit of them is here renounced, together with all triumphs founded on the detection of harmless synonymous particles that accidentally may have deserted their proper places and wandered into others, without injury to Shakspeare.—A few chipped or disjointed stones will not impair the shape or endanger the stability of a pyramid. We are far from wishing to depreciate exactness, yet cannot persuade ourselves but that a single lucky conjecture or illustration, should outweigh a thousand spurious *haths* deposed in favour of legitimate *has's*, and the like insignificant recoveries, which may not too degradingly be termed—the haberdashery of criticism : that “stand in number, though in reckoning none ;” and are as unimportant to the poet’s fame,

“ As is the morn-dew on the myrtle leaf
“ To his grand sea.”

We shall venture also to assert, that, on a minute scrutiny, every editor, in his turn, may be charged with omission of some preferable reading ; so that he who drags his predecessor to justice on this score, will have good luck if he escapes ungalled by recrimination.

If somewhat, therefore, in the succeeding volumes has been added to the correction and illustration of our author, the purpose of his present editors is completely answered. On any thing like perfection in their labours they do not presume, being too well convinced that, in defiance of their best efforts, their own incapacity, and that of the original quarto and folio-mongers, have still

* See Mr. Malone’s Preface.

left sufficient work for a race of commentators who are yet unborn. "Nos," says Tully, in the second book of his Tusculan Questions, "qui sequimur probabilia, nec ultra quàm id quod verisimile occurrerit, progredi possumus; et refellere sine pertinacia, et refelli sine iracundia, parati sumus."

Be it remembered also, that the assistants and adversaries of editors, enjoy one material advantage over editors themselves. They are at liberty to select their objects of remark:

et quæ
Desperant tractata nitescere posse, relinquunt.

The fate of the editor in form is less propitious. He is expected to combat every difficulty from which his auxiliaries and opponents could secure an honourable retreat. It should not, therefore, be wondered at, if some of his enterprizes are unsuccessful.

Though the foregoing Advertisement has run out into an unpremeditated length, one circumstance remains to be mentioned.—The form and substance of the commentary attending this republication having been materially changed and enlarged since it first appeared, in compliance with ungrateful custom the name of its original editor might have been withdrawn: but Mr. Steevens could not prevail on himself to forego an additional opportunity of recording in a title-page that he had once the honour of being united in a task of literature with Dr. Samuel Johnson. This is a distinction which malevolence cannot obscure, nor flattery transfer to any other candidate for publick favour.



It may possibly be expected, that a list of errata should attend so voluminous a work as this, or that cancels should apologize for its more material inaccuracies. Neither of these measures, however, has in the present instance been adopted, and for reasons now submitted to the publick.

In regard to errata, it has been customary with not a few authors to acknowledge small mistakes, that they

might escape the suspicion of greater*, or perhaps to intimate that no greater could be detected. Both little and great (and doubtless there may be the usual proportion of both) are here exposed (with very few exceptions) to the candour and perspicacity of the reader, who needs not to be told that in fifteen volumes octavo, of intricate and variegated printing, gone through in the space of about twenty months, the most vigilant eyes must occasionally have been overwatched, and the readiest knowledge intercepted. The sight of the editors, indeed, was too much fatigued to encourage their engagement in so laborious a revision; and they are likewise convinced that substitutes are not always qualified for their task; but instead of pointing out real mistakes, would have supposed the existence of such as were merely founded on their own want of acquaintance with the peculiarities of ancient spelling and language; for even modern poetry has sometimes been in danger from the chances of their superintendence. He whose business it is to offer this unusual apology, very well remembers to have been sitting with Dr. Johnson, when an agent from a neighbouring press brought in the proof sheet of a republication, requesting to know whether a particular word in it was not corrupted. "So far from it, Sir, (replied the Doctor, with some harshness,) that the word you suspect and would displace, is conspicuously beautiful where it stands, and is the only one that could have done the duty expected from it by Mr. Pope."

As for cancels, it is in the power of every careless binder to defeat their purpose; for they are so seldom lodged with uniformity in their proper places, that they as often serve to render copies imperfect, as to screen an author from the charge of ignorance or inattention. The leaf appropriated to one volume, is sometimes shuffled into the corresponding page of another; and sometimes the faulty leaf is withdrawn, and no other substituted in its room. These circumstances might be exemplified; but the subject is scarcely of consequence enough to be more than generally stated to the reader, whose indulgence is again solicited on account of blemishes which in

* " — the hospitable door

" Expos'd a matron, to avoid worse rape."

Paradise Lost, b. i. v. 504.

the course of an undertaking like this are unavoidable, and could not, at its conclusion, have been remedied but by the hazard of more extensive mischief;—an indulgence, indeed, that will more readily be granted, and especially for the sake of the compositors, when it is understood, that, on an average, every page of the present work, including spaces, quadrats, points, and letters, is (to speak technically) composed of 2680 distinct pieces of metal*.

As was formerly therefore observed, he who waited till the river should run dry, did not act with less reason than the editors would do, who should suspend a voluminous and complicated publication, in the vain hope of rendering it absolutely free from literary and typographical errors.

* Number of letters, &c. in a page of Shakspeare, 1793.

TEXT.	NOTES.
The average number in each line (including letters, points, spaces, &c.) is 47; the number of lines in a page—37.	The average number in each line (including letters, points, spaces, &c.) is 67; the number of lines in a page—47.
47	67
37	47
<hr/>	<hr/>
329	469
141	268
<hr/>	<hr/>
1739 in a page.	3149 in a page.

From this calculation it is clear, that a common page, admitting it to consist of 1-3d text, and 2-3ds notes, contains about 2680 distinct pieces of metal; which multiplied by 16, the number of pages in a sheet, will amount to 42,880—the misplacing of any one of which would inevitably cause a blunder.

PLYMSELL.

ADVERTISEMENT,

PREFIXED BY MR. REED TO EDITION 1803.

THE merits of our great dramattick Bard, the pride and glory of his country, have been so amply displayed by persons of various and first-rate talents, that it would appear like presumption in any one, and especially in him whose name is subscribed to this Advertisement, to imagine himself capable of adding any thing on so exhausted a subject. After the labours of men of such high estimation as Rowe, Pope, Warburton, Johnson, Farmer, and Steevens, with others of inferior name*, the rank of Shakspeare in the poetical world is not a point at this time subject to controversy. His pre-eminence is admitted; his superiority confessed. Long ago it might be said of him, as it has been, in the energetick lines of Johnson, of one almost his equal,—

“ At length, our mighty bard’s victorious lays
“ Fill the loud voice of universal praise;
“ And baffled spite, with hopeless anguish dumb,
“ Yields to renown the centuries to come.”

a renown, established on so solid a foundation, as to bid defiance to the caprices of fashion, and to the canker of time.

Leaving, therefore, the Author in quiet possession of that fame which neither detraction can lessen nor panegyrick increase, the editor will proceed to the consideration of the work now presented to the publick.

It contains the last improvements and corrections of

* It would not be easy to produce a stronger instance of a writer acting in the character of a partisan than this passage furnishes. When Mr. Reed was enumerating the criticks on Shakspeare, who were of “ high estimation,” was Mr. Malone forgotten? or was he meant to be classed with “ others of inferior name?” BOSWELL.

Mr. Steevens*, by whom it was prepared for the press, and to whom the praise is due of having first adopted, and

* Of one to whom the readers of Shakspeare are so much obliged, a slight memorial will not here be considered as misplaced.

George Steevens was born at Poplar, in the county of Middlesex, in the year 1736. His father, a man of great respectability, was engaged in a business connected with the East India Company, by which he acquired an handsome fortune. Fortunately for his son, and for the publick, the clergyman of the place was Dr. Gloucester Ridley, a man of great literary accomplishments, who is styled by Dr. Lowth *poeta natus*. With this gentleman an intimacy took place that united the two families closely together, and probably gave the younger branches of each that taste for literature which both afterwards ardently cultivated. The first part of Mr. Steevens's education he received under Mr. Wooddeson, at Kingston-upon-Thames, where he had for his school-fellows George Keate the poet, and Edward Gibbon the historian. From this seminary he removed in 1753 to King's College, Cambridge, and entered there under the tuition of the Reverend Dr. Barford. After staying a few years at the University, he left it without taking a degree, and accepted a commission in the Essex militia, in which service he continued a few years longer. In 1763 he lost his father, from whom he inherited an ample property, which if he did not lessen he certainly did not increase. From this period he seems to have determined on the course of his future life, and devoted himself to literary pursuits, which he followed with unabated vigour, but without any lucrative views, as he never required, or accepted, the slightest pecuniary recompence for his labours. His first residence was in the Temple, afterwards at Hampton, and lastly at Hampstead, where he continued near thirty years. In this retreat his life passed in one unbroken tenor, with scarce any variation, except an occasional visit to Cambridge, walking to London in the morning, six days out of seven, for the sake of health and conversation, and returning home in the afternoon of the same day. By temperance and exercise he continued healthy and active until the last two years of his life, and to the conclusion of it did not relax his attention to the illustration of Shakspeare, which was the first object of his regard. He died the 22d of January, 1800, and was buried in Poplar chapel.

To the eulogium contained in the following epitaph by Mr. Hayley, which differs in some respect from that inscribed on the monument in Poplar chapel, those who really knew Mr. Steevens will readily subscribe:

“ Peace to these ashes! once the bright attire

“ Of Steevens, sparkling with æthereal fire!

carried into execution, Dr. Johnson's admirable plan of illustrating Shakspeare by the study of writers of his own time. By following this track, most of the difficulties of the author have been overcome, his meaning (in many instances apparently lost) has been recovered, and much wild unfounded conjecture has been happily got rid of. By perseverance in this plan, he effected more to the elucidation of his author than any if not all his predecessors, and justly entitled himself to the distinction of being confessed the best editor of Shakspeare.

The edition which now solicits the notice of the publick is faithfully printed from the copy given by Mr. Steevens to the proprietors of the preceding edition, in his lifetime; with such additions as, it is presumed, he would have received, had he lived to determine on them himself. The whole was entrusted to the care of the present editor, who has, with the aid of an able and vigilant assistant, and a careful printer, endeavoured to fulfil the trust reposed in him, as well as continued ill health and depressed spirits would permit.

By a memorandum in the hand-writing of Mr. Steevens it appeared to be his intention to adopt and introduce into the prolegomena of the present edition some parts of two late works of Mr. George Chalmers. An application was therefore made to that gentleman for his consent, which was immediately granted; and to render the favour more acceptable, permission was given to divest the extracts of the offensive asperities of controversy.

“ Whose talents, varying as the diamond's ray,

“ Could fascinate alike the grave or gay !

“ How oft has pleasure in the social hour

“ Smil'd at his wit's exhilarating power !

“ And truth attested, with delight intense,

“ The serious charms of his colloquial sense !

“ His genius, that to wild luxuriance swell'd,

“ His large, yet latent, charity excell'd :

“ Want with such true beneficence he cheer'd,

“ All that his bounty gave his zeal endear'd.

“ Learning, as vast as mental power could seize,

“ In sport displaying and with grateful ease,

“ Lightly the stage of chequer'd life he trod,

“ Careless of chance, confiding in his God !

“ This tomb may perish, but not so his name

“ Who shed new lustre upon Shakspeare's fame ! ”

The portrait of Shakspeare prefixed to the present edition, [1803] is a copy of the picture formerly belonging to Mr. Felton, now to Alderman Boydell, and at present at the Shakspeare Gallery, in Pall Mall. After what has been written on the subject it will be only necessary to add, that Mr. Steevens persevered in his opinion that this, of all the portraits, had the fairest chance of being a genuine likeness of the author. Of the canvas Chandois picture he remained convinced that it possessed no claims to authenticity.

Some apology is due to those gentlemen, who, during the course of the publication, have obligingly offered the present editor their assistance, which he should thankfully have received, had he considered himself at liberty to accept their favours. He was fearful of loading the page, which Mr. Steevens in some instances thought too much crowded already, and therefore confined himself to the copy left to his care by his deceased friend.

But it is time to conclude.—He will therefore detain the reader no longer than just to offer a few words in extenuation of any errors or omissions that may be discovered in his part of the work ; a work which, notwithstanding the utmost exertion of diligence, has never been produced without some imperfection. Circumstanced as he has been, he is sensible how inadequate his powers were to the task imposed on him, and hopes for the indulgence of the reader. He feels that “ the inaudible and noiseless foot of time ” has insensibly brought on that period of life and those attendant infirmities which weaken the attachment to early pursuits, and diminish their importance :

“ Superfluous lags the veteran on the stage.”

To the admonition he is content to pay obedience ; and satisfied that the hour is arrived when “ well-timed retreat ” is the measure which prudence dictates, and reason will approve, he here bids adieu to Shakspeare, and his Commentators ; acknowledging the candour with which very imperfect efforts have been received, and wishing for his successors the same gratification he has experienced in his humble endeavours to illustrate the greatest poet the world ever knew.

ISAAC REED.

Staple Inn, May 2, 1803.

MR. STEEVENS'S
ADVERTISEMENT,

PREFIXED TO EDITION 1803.

“WHEN I said I would die a bachelor, (cries Benedict,) I did not think I should live till I were married.” The present editor of Shakspeare may urge a kindred apology in defence of an opinion hazarded in his Prefatory Advertisement; for when he declared his disbelief in the existence of a genuine likeness of our great Dramatick Writer, he most certainly did not suppose any portrait of that description could have occurred, and much less that he himself should have been instrumental in producing it*. He is happy, however, to find he was mistaken in both his suppositions; and consequently has done his utmost to promote the appearance of an accurate and finished engraving, from a picture which had been unfaithfully as well as poorly imitated by Droeshout and Marshall†.

* See Mr. Richardson's Proposals.

† “Martin Droeshout. One of the indifferent engravers of the last century. He resided in England, and was employed by the booksellers. His portraits, which are the best part of his works, have nothing but their scarcity to recommend them. He engraved the head of Shakspeare, John Fox, the martyrologist, John Howson, Bishop of Durham,” &c.

Strutt's Dictionary of Engravers, vol. i. p. 264.

“William Marshall. He was one of those laborious artists whose engravings were chiefly confined to the ornamenting of books. And indeed his patience and assiduity is all we can admire when we turn over his prints, which are prodigiously numerous. He worked with the graver only, but in a dry tasteless style; and from the similarity which appears in the design of all his portraits, it is supposed that he worked from his own drawings after the life, though he did not add the words *ad vivum*, as was common upon such occasions. But if we grant this to be

Of the character repeatedly and deliberately bestowed by the same editor on the first of these old engravers, not a single word will be retracted; for, if the judgment of experienced artists be of any value, the plate by Droeshout now under consideration has (in one instance at least) established his claim to the title of "a most abominable imitator of humanity."

Mr. Fuseli has pronounced, that the portrait described in the proposals of Mr. Richardson, was the work of a Flemish hand. It may also be observed, that the verses in praise of Droeshout's performance, were probably written as soon as they were bespoke, and before their author had found opportunity or inclination to compare the plate with its original. He might previously have known that the picture conveyed a just resemblance of Shakspeare; took it for granted that the copy would be exact; and, therefore, rashly assigned to the engraver a panegyrick which the painter had more immediately deserved. It is lucky indeed for those to whom metrical recommendations are necessary, that custom does not require they should be delivered upon oath.

It is likewise probable that Ben Jonson had no intimate acquaintance with the graphick art, and might not have been over-solicitous about the style in which Shakspeare's lineaments were transmitted to posterity.

G. S.

N. B. The character of Shakspeare as a poet; the condition of the ancient copies of his plays; the merits of his respective editors, &c. &c. have been so minutely investigated on former occasions, that any fresh advertisement of similar tendency might be considered as a tax on the reader's patience.

It may be proper indeed to observe, that the errors we have discovered in our last edition are here corrected; and that some explanations, &c. which seemed to be wanting, have likewise been supplied.

To these improvements it is now become our duty to add the genuine portrait of our author. For a particular

the case, the artist will acquire very little additional honour upon that account; for there is full as great a want of taste manifest in the design, as in the execution of his works on copper," &c. *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 125.

account of the discovery of it, we must again refer to the proposals of Mr. Richardson, at whose expence two engravings from it have been already made.

We are happy to subjoin, that Messieurs Boydell, who have resolved to decorate their magnificent edition of Shakspeare with a copy from the same original picture lately purchased by them from Mr. Felton, have not only favoured us with the use of it, but most obligingly took care, by their own immediate superintendance, that as much justice should be done to our engraving, as to their own.

P R E F A C E

TO

MR. RICHARDSON'S PROPOSALS, &c.

1794.

BEFORE the patronage of the publick is solicited in favour of a new engraving from the *only genuine portrait of Shakspeare*, it is proper that every circumstance relative to the discovery of it should be faithfully and circumstantially related.

On Friday, August 9, Mr. Richardson, printseller, of Castle Street, Leicester Square, assured Mr. Steevens that, in the course of business having recently waited on Mr. Felton, of Curzon Street, May Fair, this gentleman showed him an ancient head resembling the portrait of Shakspeare as engraved by Martin Droeshout in 1623.

Having frequently been misled by similar reports founded on inaccuracy of observation or uncertainty of recollection, Mr. Steevens was desirous to see the Portrait itself, that the authenticity of it might be ascertained by a deliberate comparison with Droeshout's performance. Mr. Felton, in the most obliging and liberal manner, permitted Mr. Richardson to bring the head, frame and all, away with him; and several unquestionable judges have concurred in pronouncing that the plate of Droeshout conveys not only a general likeness of its original, but an exact and particular one as far as this artist had ability to execute his undertaking. Droeshout could follow the outlines of a face with tolerable accuracy*, but usually

* Of some volunteer infidelities, however, Droeshout may be convicted. It is evident from the picture that Shakspeare was partly bald, and consequently that his forehead appeared unusually high. To remedy, therefore, what seemed a defect to the engraver, he has amplified the brow on the right side. For the sake of a more picturesque effect, he has also incurvated the

left them as hard as if hewn out of a rock. Thus, in the present instance, he has servilely transferred the features of Shakspeare from the painting to the copper, omitting every trait of the mild and benevolent character which his portrait so decidedly affords. There are, indeed, just such marks of a placid and amiable disposition in this resemblance of our poet, as his admirers would have wished to find.

This portrait is not painted on canvas, like the Chandos Head *, but on wood. Little more of it than the entire countenance and part of the ruff is left ; for the pannel having been split off on one side, the rest was curtailed

line in the fore part of the ruff, though in the original it is mathematically straight.

It may be observed, however, to those who examine trifles with rigour, that our early-engraved portraits were produced in the age when few had skill or opportunity to ascertain their faithfulness or infidelity. The confident artist therefore assumed the liberty of altering where he thought he could improve. The rapid workman was in too much haste to give his outline with correctness ; and the mere drudge in his profession contented himself by placing a *caput mortuum* of his original before the publick. In short, the inducements to be licentious or inaccurate, were numerous ; and the rewards of exactness were seldom attainable, most of our ancient heads of authors being done, at stated prices, for booksellers, who were careless about the veri-similitude of engravings which fashion not unfrequently obliged them to insert in the title-pages of works that deserved no such expensive decorations.

* A living artist, who was apprentice to Roubiliac, declares that when that elegant statuary undertook to execute the figure of Shakspeare for Mr. Garrick, the Chandos picture was borrowed ; but that it was, even then, regarded as a performance of suspicious aspect ; though for want of a more authentick archetype, some few hints were received, or pretended to be received, from it.

Roubiliac, towards the close of his life, amused himself by painting in oil, though with little success. Mr. Felton has his poor copy of the Chandos picture, in which our author exhibits the complexion of a Jew, or rather that of a chimney-sweeper in the jaundice.

It is singular that neither Garrick, or his friends, should have desired Roubiliac at least to look at the two earliest prints of Shakspeare ; and yet even Scheemaker is known to have had no other model for our author's head, than the mezzotinto by Zoust.

and adapted to a small frame*. On the back of it is the following inscription, written in a very old hand: "Guil. Shakspeare†, 1597 ‡. R. N." Whether these initials belong to the painter, or a former owner of the picture, is uncertain. It is clear, however, that this is the identical head from which not only the engraving by Droeshout in 1623, but that of Marshall§ in 1640 was made; and though the hazards our author's likeness was exposed to, may have been numerous, it is still in good preservation.

But, as further particulars may be wished for, it should be subjoined, that in the Catalogue of "The fourth Exhibition and Sale by private Contract at the European Museum, King Street, St. James's Square, 1792," this picture was announced to the publick in the following words:

"No. 359. A curious portrait of Shakspeare, painted in 1597."

On the 31st of May, 1792, Mr. Felton bought it for five guineas; and afterwards urging some inquiry concerning the place it came from, Mr. Wilson, the conductor of the Museum already mentioned, wrote to him as follows:

"To Mr. S. Felton, Drayton, Shropshire.

"SIR,

"——The Head of Shakspeare was purchased out of an old house known by the sign of the Boar in

* A broker now in the Minories declares, that it is his usual practice to cut down such portraits as are painted on wood, to the size of such spare frames as he happens to have in his possession.

† It is observable, that this hand-writing is of the age of Elizabeth, and that the name of Shakspeare is set down as he himself has spelt it.

‡ The age of the person represented agrees with the date on the back of the picture. In 1597 our author was in his 33d year, and in the meridian of his reputation, a period at which his resemblance was most likely to have been secured.

§ It has hitherto been supposed that Marshall's production was borrowed from that of his predecessor. But it is now manifest that he has given the very singular ruff of Shakspeare as it stands in the original picture, and not as it appears in the plate from it by Martin Droeshout.

Eastcheap, London, where Shakspeare and his friends used to resort,—and report says, was painted by a player of that time *, but whose name I have not been able to learn.—

“ I am, Sir, with great regard,

“ Your most obed^t. servant,

“ Sep. 11, 1792.”

“ J. WILSON.”

August 11, 1794, Mr. Wilson assured Mr. Steevens, that this portrait was found between four and five years ago at a broker's shop in the Minories, by a man of fashion, whose name must be concealed: that it afterwards came (attended by the Eastcheap story, &c.) with a part of that gentleman's collection of paintings, to be sold at the European Museum, and was exhibited there for about three months, during which time it was seen by Lord Leicester and Lord Orford, who both allowed it to be a genuine picture of Shakspeare.—It is natural to suppose that the mutilated state of it prevented either of their Lordships from becoming its purchaser.

How far the report on which Mr. Wilson's narratives (respecting the place where this picture was met with, &c.) were built, can be verified by evidence at present within reach, is quite immaterial, as our great dramatick author's portrait displays indubitable marks of its own authenticity. It is apparently not the work of an amateur, but of an artist by profession; and therefore could hardly have been the production of Burbage, the principal actor of his time, who (though he certainly handled the pencil) must have had insufficient leisure to perfect himself in oil-painting, which was then so little understood and practised by the natives of this kingdom †.

* The player alluded to was Richard Burbage.

A Gentleman who, for several years past, has collected as many pictures of Shakspeare as he could hear of, (in the hope that he might at last procure a genuine one,) declares that the Eastcheap legend has accompanied the majority of them, from whatever quarter they were transmitted.

It is therefore high time that picture-dealers should avail themselves of another story, this being completely worn out, and no longer fit for service.

† Much confidence, perhaps, ought not to be placed in this remark, as a succession of limners now unknown might have

Yet, by those who allow to possibilities the influence of facts, it may be said that this picture was probably the ornament of a club-room in Eastcheap, round which other resemblances of contemporary poets and players might have been arranged:—that the Boar's Head, the scene of Falstaff's jollity, might also have been the favourite tavern of Shakspeare:—that, when our author returned over London Bridge from the Globe theatre, this was a convenient house of entertainment; and that for many years afterwards (as the tradition of the neighbourhood reports) it was understood to have been a place where the wits and wags of a former age were assembled, and their portraits repositied. To such suppositions it may be replied, that Mr. Sloman, who quitted this celebrated publick house in 1767, (when all its furniture, which had devolved to him from his two immediate predecessors, was sold off,) declared his utter ignorance of any picture on the premises, except a course daubing of the Gadshill robbery *. From hence the following probabilities may be suggested:—first, that if Shakspeare's portrait was ever at the Boar's Head, it had been alienated before the fire of London in

pursued their art in England from the time of Hans Holbein to that of Queen Elizabeth.

* Philip Jones of Barnard's Inn, the auctioneer who sold off Mr. Sloman's effects, has been sought for; but he died a few years ago. Otherwise, as the knights of the hammer are said to preserve the catalogue of every auction, it might have been known whether pictures constituted any part of the Boar's Head furniture; for Mr. Sloman himself could not affirm that there were no small or obscure paintings above stairs in apartments which he had seldom or ever occasion to visit.

Mrs. Brinn, the widow of Mr. Sloman's predecessor, after her husband's decease quitted Eastcheap, took up the trade of a wire-worker, and lived in Crooked Lane. She died about ten years ago. One, who had been her apprentice (no youth,) declares she was a very particular woman, was circumstantial in her narratives, and so often repeated them, that he could not possibly forget any article she had communicated relative to the plate, furniture, &c. of the Bear's Head:—that she often spoke of the painting that represented the robbery at Gadshill, but never so much as hinted at any other pictures in the house; and had there been any, he is sure she would not have failed to describe them in her accounts of her former business and place of abode, which supplied her with materials for conversation to the very end of a long life.

1666, when the original house was burnt;—and, secondly, that the path through which the same picture has travelled since, is as little to be determined as the course of a subterraneous stream.

It may also be remarked, that if such a Portrait had existed in Eastcheap during the life of the industrious Vertue*, he would most certainly have procured it, instead of having submitted to take his first engraving of our author from a juvenile likeness of James I. and his last from Mr. Keck's unauthenticated purchase out of the dressing-room of a modern actress.

It is obvious, therefore, from the joint depositions of Mr. Wilson and Mr. Sloman, that an inference disadvantageous to the authenticity of the Boar's Head story must be drawn; for if the portrait in question arrived after a silent progress through obscurity, at the shop of a broker, who, being ignorant of its value, sold it for a few shillings, it must necessarily have been unattended by any history whatever. And if it was purchased at a sale of goods at the Boar's Head, as neither the master of the house, or his two predecessors, had the least idea of having possessed such a curiosity, no intelligence could be sent abroad with it from that quarter. In either case then we may suppose, that the legend relative to the name of its painter†, and the place where it was found, (notwithstanding both these particulars *might* be true,) were at hazard appended to the portrait under consideration, as soon as its similitude to Shakspeare had been acknowledged, and his name discovered on the back of it.—This circumstance, however, cannot affect the credit of the picture; for (as the late Lord Mansfield observed in the Douglas controversy) “there are instances in which falsehood has been employed in support of a real fact, and that it is no uncommon thing for a man to defend a true cause by fabulous pretences.”

That Shakspeare's family possessed no resemblance of him, there is sufficient reason to believe. Where then was this fashionable and therefore necessary adjunct to

* The four last publicans who kept this tavern are said to have filled the whole period, from the time of Vertue's inquiries, to the year 1788, when the Boar's Head, having been untenanted for five years, was converted into two dwellings for shopkeepers.

† The tradition that Burbage painted a likeness of Shakspeare,

his works to be sought for? If any where, in London, the theatre of his fame and fortune, and the only place where painters, at that period, could have expected to thrive by their profession. We may suppose too, that the booksellers who employed Droeshout, discovered the object of their research by the direction of Ben Jonson*, who in the following lines has borne the most ample testimony to the verisimilitude of a portrait which will now be recommended, by a more accurate and finished engraving, to the publick notice :

“ The figure, that thou here seest put,
 “ It was for gentle Shakespeare cut ;
 “ Wherein the graver had a strife
 “ With Nature, to outdoo the life :
 “ O, could he but have drawne his wit
 “ As well in brasse, as he hath hit
 “ His face † ; the print would then surpasse
 “ All that was ever writ in brasse.
 “ But, since he cannot, Reader, looke
 “ Not on his picture, but his Booke.”

That the legitimate resemblance of such a man has been indebted to chance for its preservation, would excite greater astonishment, where it not recollected, that a portrait of him has lately become an object of far higher consequence and estimation than it was during the period he flourished in, and the twenty years succeeding it ; for the profession of a player was scarcely then allowed to be reputable. This remark, however, ought not to stand unsupported by a passage in *The Microcosmos* of John

has been current in the world ever since the appearance of Mr. Granger's *Biographical History*.

* It is not improbable that Ben Jonson furnished the Dedication and Introduction to the first folio, as well as the Commendatory Verses prefixed to it.

† ————— as he hath hit

His face ;] It should seem from these words, that the plate prefixed to the folio 1623 exhibited such a likeness of Shakspeare as satisfied the eye of his contemporary, Ben Jonson, who, on an occasion like this, would hardly have ventured to assert what it was in the power of many of his readers to contradict. When will evidence half so conclusive be produced in favour of the Davenantico-Bettertonian - Barryan - Keckian - Nicolsian - Chandosan *canvas*, which bears not the slightest resemblance to the original of Droeshout's and Marshall's engraving?

Davies of Hereford, 4to. 1605, p. 215, where, after having indulged himself in a long and severe strain of satire on the vanity and affectation of the actors of his age, he subjoins—

“ Players, I loue yee and your qualitie,
 “ As ye are men that pass time not abus’d :
 “ And some I loue for *painting, poesie*,* * “ W. S. R. B.”
 “ And say fell fortune cannot be excus’d,
 “ That hath for better uses you refus’d :
 “ Wit, courage, good shape, good partes, are all good,
 “ All long as all these goods are no worse us’d † ;
 “ And though *the stage doth staine pure gentle bloud*,
 “ Yet generous yee are in minde and moode.”

The reader will observe from the initials in the margin of the third of these wretched lines, that W. Shakspeare was here alluded to as the *poet*, and R. Burbage as the *painter*.

Yet notwithstanding this compliment to the higher excellencies of our author, it is almost certain that his resemblance owes its present safety to the shelter of a series of garrets and lumber-rooms, in which it had sculked till it found its way into the broker’s shop, from whence the discernment of a modern connoisseur so luckily redeemed it.

It may also be observed, that an excellent original of Ben Jonson was lately bought at an obscure auction by Mr. Ritson of Gray’s Inn, and might once have been companion to the portrait of Shakspeare thus fortunately restored, after having been lost to the publick for a century and a half. They are, nevertheless, performances by very different artists. The face of Shakspeare was imitated by a delicate pencil, that of Jonson by a bolder hand. It is not designed, however, to appretiate the distinct value of these pictures ; though it must be allowed (as several undoubted originals of old Ben are extant) that an authentic head of Shakspeare is the greater desideratum.

To conclude—those who assume the liberty of despising prints when moderately executed, may be taught by this

† ————— are all good,

As long as all these goods are no worse us’d ;] So, in our author’s Othello :

“ Where virtue is, these are most virtuous.”

example the use and value of them ; since to a coarse engraving by a second-rate artist *, the publick is indebted for the recovery of the only genuine portrait of its favourite Shakspeare.

—◆—

Proposals by William Richardson, Printseller, Castle Street, Leicester Square, for the Publication of two Plates, from the Picture already described.

THESE plates are to be engraved of an octavo size, and in the most finished style, by T. Trotter. A fac-simile of the hand-writing, date, &c. at the back of the picture, will be given at the bottom of one of them.

They will be impressed both on octavo and quarto paper, so as to suit the best editions of the plays of Shakspeare.

Price of the pair to Subscribers 7s. 6d. No proofs will be taken off. Non-subscribers 10s. 6d.

The money to be paid at the time of subscribing, or at the delivery of the prints, which will be ready on December 1st, 1794.

Such portions of the hair, ruff, and drapery, as are wanting in the original picture, will be supplied from Droeshout's and Marshall's copies of it, in which the inanimate part of the composition may be safely followed. The mere outline in half of the plate that accompanies the finished one, will serve to ascertain how far these supplements have been adopted. To such scrupulous fidelity the publick (which has long been amused by inadequate or ideal likenesses of Shakspeare) has an undoubted claim ; and should any fine ladies and gentlemen of the present age be disgusted at the stiff garb of our author, they may readily turn their eyes aside, and feast them on the more

* There is reason to believe that Shakspeare's is the earliest known portrait of Droeshout's engraving. No wonder then that his performances twenty years after, are found to be executed with a somewhat superior degree of skill and accuracy. Yet still he was a poor engraver, and his productions are sought for more on account of their scarcity than their beauty. He seems indeed to have pleased so little in this country, that there are not above six or seven heads of his workmanship to be found.

easy and elegant suit of clothes provided for him by his modern tailors, Messieurs Zoust, Vertue, Houbraken, and the humble imitators of their supposititious drapery.

The dress that Shakspeare wears in this ancient picture, *might* have been a theatrical one; as in the course of observation such another habit has not occurred. Marshall, when he engraved from the same portrait, materially altered its paraphernalia, and, perhaps, because he thought a stage garb did not stand so characteristically before a volume of poems as before a collection of plays; and yet it must be confessed, that this change might have been introduced for no other reason than more effectually to discriminate his own production from that of his predecessor. On the same account also he might have reversed the figure.

N. B. The plates to be delivered in the order they are subscribed for; and subscriptions received at Mr. Richardson's, where the original portrait (by permission of Samuel Felton, Esq.) will be exhibited for the inspection of subscribers, together with the earlier engravings from it by Droeshout in 1623, and Marshall in 1640*.

WILLIAM RICHARDSON.

Castle Street, Leicester Square,
Nov. 5, 1794.

Supplement to the Proposals of Mr. Richardson.

WHEN the newly discovered portrait of our great dramatick writer was first shown in Castle-street, the few remaining advocates for the Chandosan canvas observed, that its unwelcome rival exhibited not a single trait of Shakspeare. But, all on a sudden, these criticks have

* It is common for an artist who engraves from a painting that has been already engraved, to place the work of his predecessor before him, that he may either catch some hints from it, or learn to avoid its errors. Marshall most certainly did so in the present instance; but while he corrected Droeshout's ruff, he has been led by him to desert his original in an unauthorised expansion of our author's forehead.

shifted their ground; and the representation originally pronounced to have been so unlike our author, is since declared to be an immediate copy from the print by Martin Droeshout.

But by what means are such direct contrarieties of opinion to be reconciled? If no vestige of the poet's features was discernible in the picture, how is it proved to be a copy from an engraving by which alone those features can be ascertained? No man will assert one thing to have been imitated from another, without allowing that there is some unequivocal and determined similitude between the objects compared.—The truth is, that the first point of objection to this unexpected portrait was soon overpowered by a general suffrage in its favour. A second attack was therefore hazarded, and has yet more lamentably failed.

As a further note of the originality of the head belonging to Mr. Felton, it may be urged, that the artist who had ability to produce such a delicate and finished portrait, could most certainly have made an exact copy from a very coarse print, provided he had not disdained so servile an occupation. On the contrary, a rude engraver like Droeshout, would necessarily have failed in his attempt to express the gentler graces of so delicate a picture. Our ancient handlers of the burin were often faithless to the character of their originals; and it is conceived that some other performances by Droeshout will furnish no exception to this remark.

Such defective imitations, however, even at this period, are sufficiently common. Several prints from well-known portraits of Sir Joshua Reynolds and Mr. Romney, are rendered worthless by similar infidelities; for notwithstanding these mezzotints preserve the outlines and general effect of their originals, the appropriate characters of them are as entirely lost as that of Shakspeare under the hand of Droeshout.—Because, therefore, an engraving has only a partial resemblance to its archetype, are we at liberty to pronounce that the one could not have been taken from the other?

It may also be observed, that if Droeshout's plate had been followed by the painter, the line in front of the ruff would have been incurvated, and not have appeared straight, as it is in the smaller print by Marshall from the same picture. In antiquated English portraits, examples

of rectilinear ruffs are familiar; but where will be found such another as the German has placed under the chin of his metamorphosed poet? From its pointed corners, resembling the wings of a bat, which are constant indications of mischievous agency, the engraver's ruff would have accorded better with the pursuits of his necromantick countryman, the celebrated Doctor Faustus.

In the mean while it is asserted by every adequate judge, that the coincidences between the picture and the print under consideration, are too strong and too numerous to have been the effects of chance. And yet the period at which this likeness of our author must have been produced, affords no evidence that any one of our early limners had condescended to borrow the general outline and disposition of his portraits from the tasteless heads prefixed to volumes issued out by booksellers. The artist, indeed, who could have filched from Droeshout, like Bardolph, might have "stolen a lute-case, carried it twelve leagues, and sold it for three halfpence."

But were the print allowed to be the original, and the painting a mere copy from it, the admission of this fact would militate in full force against the authenticity of every other anonymous and undated portrait from which a wretched old engraving had been made; as it would always enable cavillers to assert, that the painting was subsequent to the print, and not the print to the painting. True judges, however, would seldom fail to determine, (as they have in the present instance,) whether a painting was coldly imitated from a lumpish copper-plate, or taken warm from animated nature.

For the discussion of subjects like these, an eye habituated to minute comparison, and attentive to peculiarities that elude the notice of unqualified observers, is also required. Shakspeare's countenance deformed by Droeshout, resembles the sign of Sir Roger de Coverley, when it had been changed into a Saracen's head; on which occasion the Spectator observes, that the features of the gentle knight were still apparent through the lineaments of the ferocious Mussulman.

That the leading thought in the verses annexed to the plate by Droeshout is hacknied and common, will most readily be allowed; and this observation would have carried weight with it, had the lines in question been anonymous. But the subscription of Ben Jonson's name was

a circumstance that rendered him immediately responsible for the propriety of an encomium which, however open to dispute, appears to have escaped contradiction, either metrical or prosaick, from the surviving friends of Shakspeare.

But, another misrepresentation, though an involuntary one, and of more recent date, should not be overlooked.

In the matter prefatory to W. Richardson's *Proposals*, the plate by Vertue from Mr. Keck's (now the Chandos) picture, is said to have succeeded the engraving before Mr. Pope's edition of Shakspeare, in six volumes quarto*. But the contrary is the fact; and how is this circumstance to be accounted for? If in 1719 Vertue supposed the head which he afterwards admitted into his *Set of Poets*, was a genuine representation, how happened it that his next engraving of the same author, in 1725, was taken from quite a different painting, in the collection of the Earl of Oxford? Did the artist, in this instance, direct the judgment of his Lordship and Mr. Pope? or did their joint opinion over-rule that of the artist? These portraits, being wholly unlike each other, could not (were the slightest degree of respect due to either of them) be *both* received as legitimate representations of Shakspeare.—Perhaps, Vertue (who is described by Lord Orford as a lover of truth,) began to doubt the authenticity of the picture from which his first engraving had been made, and was therefore easily persuaded to expend his art on another portrait, the spuriousness of which (to himself at least) was not quite so evident as that of its predecessor.

The publick, for many years past, has been familiarized to a *Vandyckish* head of Shakspeare, introduced by Simon's mezzotinto from a painting by Zoust. Hence the countenance of our author's monumental effigy at Westminster was modelled; and a kindred representation of him has been given by Roubiliac. Such is still the Shakspeare that decorates our libraries, and seals our letters. But, “*ætatis cujusque notandi sunt tibi mores.*” On a little reflection it might have occurred, that the cavalier

* This mistake originated from a passage in Lord Orford's *Anecdotes*, &c. 8vo. vol. v. p. 258, where it is said, and truly, that Vertue's *Set of Poets* appeared in 1730. The particular plate of Shakspeare, however, as is proved by a date at the bottom of it, was engraved in 1719.

turn of head adopted from the gallant partizans of Charles I. afforded no just resemblance of the sober and chastised countenances predominating in the age of Elizabeth, during which our poet flourished, though he survived till James, for about thirteen years, had disgraced the throne.—The foregoing hint may be pursued by the judicious examiner, who will take the trouble to compare the looks and air of Shakspeare's contemporaries with the modern sculptures, &c. designed to perpetuate his image. The reader may then draw an obvious inference from these premises ; and conclude that the portrait lately exhibited to the publick is not supposititious because it presents a less spritely and confident assemblage of features than had usually been imputed to the modest and unassuming parent of the British theatre.—It is certain, that neither the *Zoustian* or *Chandosian canvas* has displayed the least trait of a *quiet and gentle bard* of the *Elizabethan* age.

To ascertain the original owner of the portrait now Mr. Felton's, is an undertaking difficult enough ; and yet conjecture may occasionally be sent out on a more hopeless errand.

The old pictures at Tichfield House, as part of the Wriothesley property, were divided, not many years ago, between the Dukes of Portland and Beaufort. Some of these paintings that were in good condition were removed to Bulstrode, where two portraits* of Shakspeare's Earl of Southampton are still preserved. What became of other heads which time or accident had impaired, and at what period the remains of the furniture, &c. of his Lordship's venerable mansion were sold off and dispersed, it may be fruitless to enquire.

Yet, as the likeness of our author lately redeemed from obscurity was the work of some eminent Flemish artist, it was probably painted for a personage of distinction, and might therefore have belonged to the celebrated Earl whom Shakspeare had previously complimented by the dedication of his *Venus and Adonis*. Surely, it is not unreasonable to suppose, that a resemblance of our excellent dramattick poet might have been found in the house of a nobleman who is reported to have loved him well enough to have presented him with a thousand pounds.

* One of these portraits is on canvas, and therefore the genuineness of it is controverted, if not denied.

To conclude—the names* which have honoured the subscription for an engraving from this new-found portrait of Shakspeare, must be allowed to furnish the most decisive estimate of its value.

[Since the foregoing paper was received, we have been authorized to inform the publick, that Messieurs Boydell and Nicol are so thoroughly convinced of the genuineness of Mr. Felton's Shakspeare, that they are determined to engrave it as a frontispiece to their splendid edition of our author, instead of having recourse to the exploded picture inherited by the Chandos family.]

From the European Magazine, for December, 1794.



The following pages †, on account of their connection with the subject of Mr. Richardson's Remarks, are suffered to stand as in our last edition.

* In the numerous List of Gentlemen who thoroughly examined this original Picture, were convinced of its authenticity, and immediately became Subscribers to W. Richardson, are the names of—Dr. Farmer, Mr. Cracherode, Mr. Bindley, Sir Joseph Banks, Sir George Shuckburgh, Mr. Chalmers, Mr. Reed, Mr. Ritson, Mr. Douce, Mr. Markham, Mr. Weston, Mr. Lysons, Mr. James, Col. Stanley, Mr. Coombe, Mr. Lodge, Mess. Smith, sen. and jun. Mr. Nicol, Mr. Boaden, Mr. Pearce, Mr. Whitefoord, Mr. Thane, Mess. Boydell, Mr. G. Romney, Mr. Lawrence, (Portrait-painter to his Majesty,) Mr. Bowyer, (Miniature-painter to his Majesty,) Mr. Barry, R. A. (Professor of Painting,) &c. &c. &c.

† Mr. Steevens's Advertisement, prefixed to edition 1793, which, being now printed in its chronological order, will be found in a former part of this volume. BOSWELL.

AN
ESSAY
ON THE
LEARNING OF SHAKSPEARE:

ADDRESSED TO
JOSEPH CRADOCK, ESQ.

“SHAKSPEARE,” says a brother of the *craft**, “is a vast garden of criticism:” and certainly no one can be favoured with more weeders *gratis*.

But how often, my dear sir, are weeds and flowers torn up indiscriminately?—the ravaged spot is replanted in a moment, and a profusion of critical thorns thrown over it for security.

“A prudent man, therefore, would not venture his fingers amongst them.”

Be however in little pain for your friend, who regards himself sufficiently to be cautious:—yet he asserts with confidence, that no improvement can be expected, whilst the natural soil is mistaken for a hot-bed, and the natives of the banks of Avon are scientifically choked with the culture of exoticks.

Thus much for metaphor; it is contrary to the *statute* to fly out so early: but who can tell, whether it may not be demonstrated by some critick or other, that a deviation from rule is peculiarly happy in an Essay on Shakspeare!

You have long known my opinion concerning the literary acquisitions of our immortal dramatist; and remem-

* Mr. Seward, in his Preface to Beaumont and Fletcher, 10 vols. 8vo. 1750.

ber how I congratulated myself on my coincidence with the last and best of his editors. I told you, however, that his "small Latin and less Greek"* would still be litigated, and you see very assuredly that I was not mistaken. The trumpet hath been sounded against "the darling project of representing Shakspeare as one of the illiterate vulgar;" and indeed to so good purpose, that I would by all means recommend the performer to the army of the *braying faction*, recorded by Cervantes. The testimony of his contemporaries is again disputed; constant tradition is opposed by flimsy arguments; and nothing is heard, but confusion and nonsense. One could scarcely imagine this a topick very likely to inflame the passions: it is asserted by Dryden, that "those who accuse him to have wanted learning, give him the greatest commendation;" yet an attack upon an article of faith hath been usually received with more temper and complacence, than the unfortunate opinion which I am about to defend.

But let us previously lament, with every lover of Shakspeare, that the question was not fully discussed by Mr. Johnson himself: what he sees intuitively, others must arrive at by a series of proofs; and I have not time to *teach* with precision: be contented therefore with a few cursory observations, as they may happen to arise from the chaos of papers, you have so often laughed at, "a stock sufficient to set up an *editor in form*." I am convinced of the strength of my cause, and superior to any little advantage from sophistical arrangements.

General positions without proofs will probably have no great weight on either side, yet it may not seem fair to suppress them: take them therefore as their authors occur to me, and we will afterward proceed to particulars.

The testimony of Ben. stands foremost; and some have held it sufficient to decide the controversy: in the warmest panegyrick, that ever was written, he apo-

* This passage of Ben Jonson, so often quoted, is given us in the admirable preface to the late edition, with a various reading, "small Latin and *no* Greek," which hath been held up to the publick for a modern sophistication: yet whether an error or not, it was adopted above a century ago by W. Towers, in a panegyric on Cartwright. His eulogy, with more than fifty others, on this now forgotten poet, was prefixed to the edit. 1651.

logizes * for what *he* supposed the only defect in his "beloved friend,—

‘————— Soul of the age!

‘Th’ applause! delight! the wonder of our stage!’—

whose memory he honoured almost to idolatry:" and conscious of the worth of ancient literature, like any other man on the same occasion, he rather carries his acquirements *above*, than *below* the truth. "Jealousy!" cries Mr. Upton; "people will allow others any qualities, but those upon which they highly value *themselves*." Yes, where there is a competition, and the competitor formidable: but, I think, this critick himself hath scarcely set in opposition the learning of Shakspeare and Jonson. When a superiority is universally granted, it by no means appears a man's literary interest to depress the reputation of his antagonist.

In truth the received opinion of the pride and malignity of Jonson, at least in the earlier part of life, is absolutely groundless: at this time scarce a play or a poem appeared without Ben's encomium, from the original Shakspeare to the translator of Du Bartas.

But Jonson is by no means our only authority. Drayton, the countryman and acquaintance of Shakspeare, determines his excellence to the *naturall braine*† only. Digges, a wit of the town, before our poet left the stage, is very strong to the purpose,

"—— Nature only helpt him, for looke thorow

"This whole book, thou shalt find he doth not borow,

"One phrase from Greekes, not Latines imitate,

"Nor once from vulgar languages translate ‡."

Suckling opposed his "easier strain" to the "sweat of the learned Jonson." Denham assures us, that all he had was from "old mother-wit." "His native wood-

* "Though thou hadst *small Latin*," &c.

† In his Elegie on Poets and Poesie, p. 206. Folio, 1627.

‡ From his Poem upon Master William Shakspeare, intended to have been prefixed, with the other of his composition, to the folio of 1623: and afterward printed in several miscellaneous collections: particularly the spurious edition of Shakspeare's Poems, 1640. Some account of him may be met with in Wood's Athenæ.

notes wild," every one remembers to be celebrated by Milton. Dryden observes prettily enough, that "he wanted not the spectacles of books to read nature." He came out of her hand, as some one else expresses it, like Pallas out of Jove's head, at full growth and mature.

The ever memorable Hales of Eton, (who, notwithstanding his epithet, is, I fear, almost forgotten,) had too great a knowledge both of Shakspeare and the ancients to allow much acquaintance between them: and urged very justly on the part of genius in opposition to pedantry, that "if he had not *read* the classicks, he had likewise not *stolen* from them; and if any topick was produced from a poet of antiquity he would undertake to show somewhat on the same subject, at least as well written by Shakspeare."

Fuller, a diligent and equal searcher after truth and quibbles, declares positively, that "his learning was very little,—*nature* was all the *art* used upon him, as *he himself*, if alive, would confess." And may we not say, he did confess it, when he apologized for his *untutored lines* to his noble patron the Earl of Southampton?—this list of witnesses might be easily enlarged; but I flatter myself, I shall stand in no need of such evidence.

One of the first and most vehement assertors of the learning of Shakspeare, was the editor of his poems, the well-known Mr. Gildon*; and his steps were most punctually taken by a subsequent labourer in the same department, Dr. Sewell.

* Hence perhaps the *ill-starr'd rage* between this critick and his elder brother, John Dennis, so pathetically lamented in the Dunciad. Whilst the former was persuaded, that "the man who doubts of the learning of Shakspeare, hath none of his own:" the latter, above regarding the attack in his *private* capacity, declares with great patriotick vehemence, that "he who allows Shakspeare had learning, and a learning with the ancients, ought to be looked upon as a detractor from the glory of Great Britain." Dennis was expelled his college for attempting to stab a man in the dark: Pope would have been glad of this anecdote †.

† See this fact established against the doubts and objections of Dr. Kippis in the Biographia Britannica, in Dr. Farmer's Letter to me, printed in the European Magazine, June 1794, p. 412. REED.

Mr. Pope supposed, "little ground for the common opinion of his want of learning:" once indeed he made a proper distinction between *learning* and *languages*, as I would be understood to do in my title-page; but unfortunately he forgot it in the course of his disquisition, and endeavoured to persuade himself that Shakspeare's acquaintance with the ancients might be actually proved by the same medium as Jonson's.

Mr. Theobald is "very unwilling to allow him so poor a scholar, as many have laboured to represent him;" and yet is "cautious of declaring too positively on the other side of the question."

Dr. Warburton hath exposed the weakness of some arguments from *suspected* imitations; and yet offers others, which, I doubt not, he could as easily have refuted.

Mr. Upton wonders "with what kind of reasoning any one could be so far imposed upon, as to imagine that Shakspeare had no learning;" and lashes with much zeal and satisfaction "the pride and pertness of dunces, who, under such a name would gladly shelter their own idleness and ignorance."

He, like the learned knight, at every anomaly in grammar or metre,

"Hath hard words ready to show why,
"And tell what *rule* he did it by."

How would the old bard have been astonished to have found, that he had very skilfully given the *trochaic dimeter brachycatalectic*, commonly called the *ithyphallic* measure to the Witches in Macbeth! and that now and then a halting verse afforded a most beautiful instance of the *pes proceleusmaticus*!

"But," continues Mr. Upton, "it was a learned age; Roger Ascham assures us, that Queen Elizabeth read more Greek every day, than some *dignitaries* of the church did Latin in a whole week." This appears very probable; and a pleasant proof it is of the general learning of the times, and of Shakspeare in particular. I wonder, he did not corroborate it with an extract from her injunctions to her clergy, that "such as were but *mean readers* should peruse over before, once or twice, the chapters and homilies, to the intent they might read to the better understanding of the people."

Dr. Grey declares, that Shakspeare's knowledge in the

Greek and Latin tongues cannot *reasonably* be called in question. Dr. Dodd supposes it proved, that he was not such a novice in learning and antiquity as *some people* would pretend. And to close the whole, for I suspect you to be tired of quotation, Mr. Whalley, the ingenious editor of Jonson, hath written a piece expressly on this side the question: perhaps from a very excusable partiality, he was willing to draw Shakspeare from the field of nature to classick ground, where alone, he knew, his author could possibly cope with him.

These criticks, and many others their coadjutors, have supposed themselves able to trace Shakspeare in the writings of the ancients; and have sometimes persuaded us of their own learning, whatever became of their author's. Plagiarisms have been discovered in every natural description and every moral sentiment. Indeed by the kind assistance of the various Excerpta, Sententiæ, and Flores, this business may be effected with very little expence of time or sagacity; as Addison hath demonstrated in his comment on Chevy-chase, and Wagstaff on Tom Thumb; and I myself will engage to give you quotations from the elder English writers (for to own the truth, I was once idle enough to collect such,) which shall carry with them at least an equal degree of similarity. But there can be no occasion of wasting any future time in this department: the world is now in possession of the Marks of Imitation.

"Shakspeare, however, hath frequent allusions to the *facts* and *fables* of antiquity." Granted:—and as Mat. Prior says, to save the effusion of more Christian ink, I will endeavour to show, how they came to his acquaintance.

It is notorious, that much of his *matter of fact* knowledge is deduced from Plutarch: but in what language he read him, hath yet been the question. Mr. Upton is pretty confident of his skill in the original, and corrects accordingly the *errors of his copyists* by the Greek standard. Take a few instances, which will elucidate this matter sufficiently.

In the third Act of Antony and Cleopatra, Octavius represents to his courtiers the imperial pomp of those illustrious lovers, and the arrangement of their dominion,

" ————— Unto her

" He gave the 'stablishment of Egypt, made her

" Of lower Syria, Cyprus, *Lydia*,

" Absolute queen."

Read *Libyā*, says the critick *authoratively*, as is plain from Plutarch,

This is very true: Mr. Heath * accedes to the correction, and Mr. Johnson admits it into the text: but turn to the translation, from the French of Amyot, by Thomas North, in folio, 1579 †, and you will at once see the origin of the mistake.

“First of all he did establish Cleopatra queene of Ægypt, of Cyprus, of *Lydia*, and the lower Syria.”

Again, in the fourth Act:

“———— My messenger

“He hath whipt with rods, dares me to personal combat,

“Cæsar to Antony. Let th’ old ruffian know

“I have many other ways to die; mean time

“Laugh at his challenge——.”

“What a reply is this?” cries Mr. Upton, “’tis acknowledging he should fall under the unequal combat. But if we read,

“———— Let the old ruffian know

“He hath many other ways to die; mean time

“I laugh at his challenge——.”

we have the poignancy and the very repartee of Cæsar in Plutarch.”

This correction was first made by Sir Thomas Hanmer, and Mr. Johnson hath received it. Most indisputably it is the sense of Plutarch, and given so in the modern translation: but Shakspeare was misled by the ambiguity of the old one: “Antonius sent again to challenge Cæsar to fight him: Cæsar answered, That *he* had many other ways to die, than so.”

In the third Act of Julius Cæsar, Antony, in his well-known harangue to the people, repeats a part of the emperor’s will:

* It is extraordinary, that this gentleman should attempt so voluminous a work, as the Revisal of Shakspeare’s Text, when, he tells us in his Preface, “he was not so fortunate as to be furnished with either of the *folio* editions, much less any of the ancient *quartos* :” and even Sir Thomas Hanmer’s performance was known to him only by Mr. Warburton’s representation.

† I find the character of this work pretty early delineated:

“’Twas Greek at first, that Greek was Latin made,

“That Latin, French; that French to English straid:

“Thus ’twixt one Plutarch there’s more difference,

“Than i’t’h same Englishman return’d from France.”

“ — To every Roman citizen he gives,
 “ To every sev’ral man, seventy-five drachmas.—
 “ Moreover he hath left you all his walks,
 “ His private arbours, and new-planted orchards,
 “ On *this* side Tiber—.”

“ Our author certainly wrote,” says Mr. Theobald,—
 “ On *that* side Tiber—

“ *Trans* Tiberim—prope Cæsaris hortos.”

And Plutarch, whom Shakspeare very diligently studied, expressly declares, that he left the publick his gardens and walks, πέραν τῇ Ποταμῷ, *beyond* the Tyber.”

This emendation likewise hath been adopted by the subsequent editors; but here again the old translation, where Shakspeare’s *study* lay: “ He bequeathed unto every citizen of Rome seventy-five drachmas a man, and he left his gardens and arbours unto the people, which he had on *this* side of the river of Tyber.” I could furnish you with many more instances, but these are as good as a thousand.

Hence had our author his characteristick knowledge of Brutus and Antony, upon which much argumentation for his learning had been founded: and hence *literatim* the epitaph on Timon, which it was once presumed, he had corrected from the blunders of the Latin version, by his own superior knowledge of the original*.

I cannot, however, omit a passage from Mr. Pope: “ The *speeches* copied from Plutarch in Coriolanus may, I think, be as well made an instance of the learning of Shakspeare, as those copy’d from Cicero in Catiline, of Ben Jonson’s.” Let us inquire into this matter, and transcribe a *speech* for a specimen. Take the famous one of Volumnia:

“ Should we be silent and not speak, our raiment
 “ And state of bodies would bewray what life
 “ We’ve led since thy exile. Think with thyself,
 “ How more unfortunate than all living women
 “ Are we come hither; since thy sight, which should
 “ Make our eyes flow with joy, hearts dance with comforts,
 “ Constrains them weep, and shake with fear and sorrow;
 “ Making the mother, wife, and child to see

* See Theobald’s Preface to King Richard II. 8vo. 1720.

" The son, the husband, and the father tearing
 " His country's bowels out : and to poor we
 " Thy enmity's most capital; thou barr'st us
 " Our prayers to the gods, which is a comfort
 " That all but we enjoy. For how can we,
 " Alas ! how can we, for our country pray,
 " Where to we're bound, together with thy victory,
 " Where to we're bound ? Alack ! or we must lose
 " The country, our dear nurse ; or else thy person,
 " Our comfort in the country. We must find
 " An eminent calamity, though we had
 " Our wish, which side shou'd win. For either thou
 " Must, as a foreign recreant, be led
 " With manacles thorough our streets ; or else
 " Triumphantly tread on thy country's ruin,
 " And bear the palm, for having bravely shed
 " Thy wife and children's blood. For myself, son,
 " I purpose not to wait on fortune, till
 " These wars determine : if I can't persuade thee
 " Rather to show a noble grace to both parts,
 " Than seek the end of one ; thou shalt no sooner
 " March to assault thy country, than to tread
 " (Trust to't, thou shalt not,) on thy mother's womb,
 " That brought thee to this world."

I will now give you the old translation, which shall effectually confute Mr. Pope : for our author hath done little more, than thrown the very words of North into blank verse.

" If we helde our peace (my sonne) and determined not
 to speake, the state of our poore bodies, and present sight
 of our rayment, would easely bewray to thee what life we
 haue led at home, since thy exile and abode abroad. But
 thinke now with thy selfe, howe much more unfortunately,
 then all the women liuinge we are come hether, consider-
 ing that the sight which should be most pleasaunt to all
 other to beholde, spitefull fortune hath made most fear-
 full to us : making my selfe to see my sonne, and my
 daughter here, her husband, besieging the walles of his
 natiue countrie. So as that which is the only comfort to
 all other in their aduersitie and miserie, to pray unto the
 goddes, and to call to them for aide ; is the onely thinge
 which plongeth us into most deepe perplexitie. For we can-
 not (alas) together pray, both for victorie, for our countrie,
 and for safety of thy life also : but a worlde of grievous
 curses, yea more than any mortall enemy can heappe

uppon us, are forcibly wrapt up in our prayers. For the bitter soppe of most harde choyce is offered thy wife and children, to foregoe the one of the two : either to lose the persone of thy selfe, or the nurse of their natiue contrie. For my selfe (my sonne) I am determind not to tarrie, till fortune in my life time doe make an ende of this warre. For if I cannot persuade thee, rather to doe good unto both parties, then to ouerthrowe and destroye the one, preferring loue and nature before the malice and calamitie of warres : thou shalt see, my sonne, and trust unto it, thou shalt no soner marche forward to assault thy countrie, but thy foote shall tread upon thy mother's wombe, that brought thee first into this world."

The length of this quotation will be excused for its curiosity; and it happily wants not the assistance of a comment. But matters may not always be so easily managed :—a plagiarism from Anacreon hath been detected :

" The sun's a thief, and with his great attraction
 " Robs the vast sea. The moon's an arrant thief,
 " And her pale fire she snatches from the sun.
 " The sea's a thief, whose liquid surge resolves
 " The moon into salt tears. The earth's a thief,
 " That feeds and breeds by a composture stol'n
 " From gen'ral excrement : each thing's a thief."

" This (says Dr. Dodd) is a good deal in the manner of the celebrated *drinking Ode*, too well known to be inserted." Yet it may be alledged by those, who imagine Shakspeare to have been generally able to think for himself, that the topicks are obvious, and their application is different.—But for argument's sake, let the parody be granted; and " our author (says some one) may be puzzled to prove, that there was a Latin translation of Anacreon at the time Shakspeare wrote his *Timon of Athens*." This challenge is peculiarly unhappy : for I do not at present recollect any *other classick*, (if indeed, with great deference to Mynheer De Pauw, Anacreon may be numbered amongst them,) that was *originally* published with *two Latin* * translations.

* By Henry Stephens and Alias Andreas, Par. 1554, 4to. ten years before the birth of Shakspeare. The former version hath been ascribed without reason to John Dorat. Many other translators appeared before the end of the century : and particularly the Ode in question was made popular by Buchanan, whose pieces were soon to be met with in almost every modern language.

But this is not all. Puttenham in his *Arte of English Poesie*, 1589, quotes some one of a “reasonable good facilitie in translation, who finding *certaine* of Anacreon’s Odes very well translated by Ronsard the French poet—comes our minion, and translates the same out of French into English:” and his strictures upon him evince the publication. Now this identical ode is to be met with in Ronsard! and as his works are in few hands, I will take the liberty of transcribing it.

“ La terre les eaux va boivant,
 “ L’ arbre la boit par sa racine,
 “ La mer salee boit le vent,
 “ Et le soleil boit la marine.
 “ Le soleil est beu de la lune,
 “ Tout boit soit en haut ou en bas :
 “ Suivant ceste reigle commune,
 “ Pourquoi donc ne boirons-nous pas ?”

Edit. Fol. p. 507.

I know not whether an observation or two relative to our author’s acquaintance with Homer, be worth our investigation. The ingenious Mrs. Lenox observes on a passage of *Troilus and Cressida*, where Achilles is roused to battle by the death of Patroclus, that Shakspeare must *here* have had the *Iliad* in view, as “ the old story *, which in many places he hath faithfully copied, is absolutely silent with respect to this circumstance.”

And Mr. Upton is positive that the *sweet oblivious antidote*, enquired after by Macbeth, could be nothing but the *nepenthe* described in the *Odyssey*,

Νηπενθές τ’ ἄχολόν τε, κακῶν ἐπίληθον ἀπάντων.

I will not insist upon the translations by Chapman; as the first editions are without date, and it may be difficult to ascertain the exact time of their publication. But the *former* circumstance might have been learned from Alex-

* It was originally drawn into Englishe by Caxton under the name of *The Recuyel of the Historyes of Troy*, from the French of the ryght venerable Person and worshipfull man Raoul le Feure, and fynyshe in the holy citey of Colen, the 19 day of Septembre, the yere of our Lord God, a thousand foure hundred sixty and enleuen. Wynkyn de Worde printed an edit. fol. 1503, and there have been several subsequent ones.

ander Barclay*; and the *latter* more fully from Spenser†, than from Homer himself.

But Shakspeare" persists Mr. Upton, "hath some *Greek expressions*." Indeed!—"We have one in *Coriolanus*:

" ————— It is held
 " That valour is the chiefest virtue, and
 " Most dignifies the *haver*."

and another in *Macbeth*, where Banquo addresses the weird sisters:

" ————— My noble partner
 " You greet with present grace, and great prediction
 " Of noble *having*."

Gr. ἔχουσα.—and πρὸς τὸν ἔχοντα, to the *haver*."

This was the common language of Shakspeare's time. "Lye in a water-bearer's house!" says Master Mathew of Bobadil, "a gentleman of his *havings*!"

Thus likewise John Davies in his *Pleasant Descant upon English Proverbs*, printed with his *Scourge of Folly*, about 1612:

" *Do well and have well!*—neyther so still:
 " For some are good *doers*, whose *havings* are ill."

and Daniel the historian uses it frequently. *Having* seems to be synonymous with *behaviour* in Gawin Douglas‡ and the elder Scotch writers.

Haver, in the sense of *possessor*, is every where met with: though unfortunately the πρὸς τὸν ἔχοντα of Sophocles produced as an authority for it, is suspected by

* "Who list this history of Patroclus to reade," &c.

Ship of Fooles, 1570, p. 21.

† "Nepenthe is a drinck of soueragne grace,

"Deuized by the gods, for to asswage

"Harts grief, and bitter gall away to chace—

"Instead thereof sweet peace and quietage

"It doth establish in the troubled mynd," &c.

Faerie Queene, 1596, book iv. c. iii. st. 43.

‡ It is very remarkable, that the bishop is called by his countryman, Sir David Lindsey, in his *Complaint of our Souerane Lordis Papingo*,

"In our *Inglische* rethorick the rose."

And Dunbar hath a similar expression in his beautiful poem of *The Goldin Terge*.

Kuster*, as good a critick in these matters, to have absolutely a different meaning.

But what shall we say to the learning of the Clown in Hamlet, "Ay, tell me that, that *unyoke*?" alluding to the Βελυτός of the Greeks; and Homer and his scholiast are quoted accordingly!

If it be not sufficient to say, with Dr. Warburton, that the phrase might have been taken from husbandry, without much depth of reading; we may produce it from a Dittie of the workmen of Dover, preserved in the additions to Holinshed, p. 1546:

" My bow is broke, I would *unyoke*,
" My foot is sore, I can worke no more."

An expression of my Dame Quickley is next fastened upon, which you may look for in vain in the modern text; she calls some of the pretended fairies in The Merry Wives of Windsor:

" — Orphan † heirs of fixed Destiny."

" And how elegant is this," quoth Mr. Upton, supposing the word to be used, as a Grecian would have used it? "*ὀρφανός* ab *ὀφρυνός*—acting in darkness and obscurity."

Mr. Heath assures us, that the bare mention of such an interpretation, is a sufficient refutation of it: and his critical word will be rather taken in Greek than in English:

* Aristophanis Comœdiæ undecim. Gr. & Lat. Amst. 1710, Fol. p. 596.

† Dr. Warburton corrects *orphan* to *ouphen*; and not without plausibility, as the word *ouphes* occurs both before and afterward. But I fancy, in acquiescence to the vulgar doctrine, the address in this line is to a part of the *troop*, as mortals by birth, but adopted by the fairies: *orphans* with respect to their *real* parents, and now only dependant on *Destiny* herself. A few lines from Spenser, will sufficiently illustrate the passage:

" The man whom *heavens* have *ordayn'd* to bee
" The spouse of *Britomart*, is *Arthegall*:
" He wonneth in the land of *fayeree*,
" Yet is no *fary* borne, ne sib at all
" To elves, but sprong of seed *terrestriall*,
" And whilome by false *faries* stolen away,
" Whyles yet in infant cradle he did crall," &c.

Edit. 1590, Book III. c. iii. st. 26.

in the same hands therefore I will venture to leave all our author's knowledge of the *old comedy*, and his etymological learning in the word, *Desdemonia**.

Surely poor Mr. Upton was very little acquainted with *fairies*, notwithstanding his laborious study of Spenser. The last authentick account of them is from our countryman William Lilly†; and it by no means agrees with the *learned* interpretation: for the *angelical creatures* appeared in his *Hurst wood* in a *most illustrious glory*,—"and indeed, (says the sage,) it is not given to many persons to endure their *glorious aspects*."

The only use of transcribing these things, is to show what absurdities men for ever run into, when they lay down an hypothesis, and afterward seek for arguments in the support of it. What else could induce this man, by no means a bad scholar, to doubt whether *Truepenny* might not be derived from *Τρύπανον*; and quote upon us with much parade an old scholiast on Aristophanes?—I will not stop to confute him: nor take any notice of two or three more expressions, in which he was pleased to suppose some learned meaning or other; all which he might have found in every writer of the time, or still more easily in the vulgar translation of the Bible, by consulting the Concordance of Alexander Cruden.

But whence have we the plot of *Timon*, except from the Greek of Lucian?—The editors and criticks have never been at a greater loss than in their enquiries of this sort; and the source of a tale hath been often in vain sought abroad, which might easily have been found at home: my good friend, the very ingenious editor of the *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, hath shown our author to have been sometimes contented with a legendary *ballad*.

The story of the misanthrope is told in almost every collection of the time; and particularly in two books, with which Shakspeare was intimately acquainted; the *Palace of Pleasure*, and the *English Plutarch*. Indeed from a passage in an old play, called *Jack Drum's Entertainment*, I conjecture that he had before made his appearance on the stage,

Were this a proper place for such a disquisition, I could

* Revisal, p. 75, 323, and 561.

† History of his Life and Times, p. 102, preserved by his dupe, Mr. Ashmole.

give you many cases of this kind. We are sent for instance to Cinthio for the plot of *Measure for Measure*, and Shakspeare's judgment hath been attacked for some deviations from him in the conduct of it: when probably all he knew of the matter was from madam Isabella in the *Heptameron* of Whetstone*. Ariosto is continually quoted for the fable of *Much Ado about Nothing*: but I suspect our poet to have been satisfied with the *Geneura* of Turberville†. As you *Like It* was certainly borrowed, if we believe Dr. Grey, and Mr. Upton, from the *Coke's Tale of Gamelyn*; which by the way was not printed till a century afterward: when in truth the old bard, who was no hunter of MSS. contented himself solely with Lodge's *Rosalynd*, or Euphues' *Golden Legacye*, quarto, 1590. The story of *All's Well that End's Well*, or, as I suppose it to have been sometimes called, *Love's Labour Wonne*‡, is originally indeed the property of Boccace§, but it came immediately to Shakspeare from Painter's *Giletta of Narbon*||. Mr. Langbaine could not conceive, whence the story of

* Lond. 4to. 1582. She reports in the fourth dayes exercise, the rare Historie of Promos and Cassandra. A marginal note informs us, that Whetstone was the author of the *Commedie* on that subject; which likewise might have fallen into the hands of Shakspeare.

† "The tale is a pretie comicall matter, and hath bin written in English verse some few years past, learnedly and with good grace by M. George Turberuil." Harrington's *Ariosto*, fol. 1591, p. 39.

‡ See Meres's *Wits Treasury*, 1598, p. 282.

§ Our ancient poets are under greater obligations to Boccace, than is generally imagined. Who would suspect, that Chaucer hath borrowed from an Italian the facetious tale of the *Miller of Trumpington*?

Mr. Dryden observes on the epick performance, *Palamon and Arcite*, a poem little inferior in his opinion to the *Iliad* or the *Æneid*, that the name of its author is wholly lost, and Chaucer is now become the original. But he is mistaken; this too was the work of Boccace, and printed at Ferrara in folio, *con il commento di Andrea Bassi*, 1475. I have seen a copy of it, and a translation into modern Greek, in the noble library of the very learned and communicative Dr. Askew.

It is likewise to be met with in old French, under the title of *La Theseide de Jean Boccace, contenant les belles & chastes amours de deux jeunes Chevaliers Thebains Arcite & Palemon*.

|| In the first Vol. of the *Palace of Pleasure*, 4to. 1566.

Pericles could be taken, "not meeting in history with any such Prince of Tyre;" yet his legend may be found at large in old Gower, under the name of Appolynus*.

Pericles is one of the plays omitted in the latter editions, as well as the early folios: and not improperly: though it was published many years before the death of Shakspeare, with his name in the title-page. Aulus Gellius informs us, that some plays are ascribed absolutely to Plautus, which he only *re-touched* and *polished*; and this is undoubtedly the case with our author likewise. The revival of this performance, which Ben Jonson calls *stale* and *mouldy*, was probably his earliest attempt in the drama. I know, that another of these discarded pieces, The Yorkshire Tragedy, hath been frequently called so; but most certainly it was not written by our poet at all: nor indeed was it printed in his life-time. The fact on which it is built, was perpetrated no sooner than 1604†: much too late for so mean a performance from the hand of Shakspeare.

Sometimes a very little matter detects a forgery. You may remember a play called The Double Falsehood, which Mr. Theobald was desirous of palming upon the world for a posthumous one of Shakspeare: and I see it is classed as such in the last edition of the Bodleian catalogue. Mr. Pope himself, after all the strictures of Scriblerus‡, in a letter to Aaron Hill, supposes it of that age; but a mistaken accent determines it to have been written since the middle of the last century:

* *Confessio Amantis*, printed by T. Berthelet, folio, 1532, p. 175, &c.

† "William Caluerly, of Caluerly in Yorkshire, Esquire, murdered two of his owne children in his owne house, then stabde his wife into the body with full intent to haue killed her, and then instantlie with like fury went from his house, to haue slaine his yongest childe at nurse, but was preuented. Hee was prest to death in Yorke the 5 of August, 1604." Edm. Howes' Continuation of John Stowe's Summarie, 8vo. 1607, p. 574. The story appeared before in a 4to pamphlet, 1605. It is omitted in the folio chronicle, 1631.

‡ These, however, he assures Mr. Hill, were the property of Dr. Arbuthnot.

“ ——— This late example
 “ Of base Henriquez, bleeding in me now,
 “ From each good *aspect* takes away my trust.”

And in another place,

“ You have an *aspect*, sir, of wondrous wisdom.”

The word *aspect*, you perceive, is here accented on the *first* syllable, which, I am confident, in *any* sense of it, was never the case in the time of Shakspeare; though it may sometimes appear to be so, when we do not observe a preceding *elision*.*

Some of the professed imitators of our old poets have not attended to this and many other *minutiæ*; I could point out to you several performances in the respective styles of Chaucer, Spenser, Shakspeare, which the *imitated* bard could not possibly have either read or construed.

This very accent has troubled the annotators on Milton. Dr. Bentley observes it to be “ a *tone* different from the present use.” Mr. Manwaring, in his Treatise of Harmony and Numbers, very solemnly informs us, that “ this verse is defective both in accent and quantity, B. III. v. 266 :

“ His words here ended, but his meek *aspéct*
 “ Silent yet spake.——”

Here (says he) a syllable is *acuted* and *long*, whereas it should be *short* and *graved*!”

And a still more extraordinary gentleman, one Green, who published a specimen of a new version of the Paradise Lost, into *blank* verse, “ by which that amazing work is brought somewhat nearer the summit of perfection,” begins with correcting a blunder in the fourth Book, v. 540 :

“ ——— The setting sun
 “ Slowly descended, and with right *aspéct*—
 “ Levell’d his evening rays.——”

Not so in the *new* version :

* Thus a line in Hamlet’s description of the Player, should be printed as in the old folios :

“ Tears in his eyes, distraction in’s *aspéct*.”
 agreeably to the accent in a hundred other places.

“ Meanwhile the setting sun descending slow—
 “ Level’d with *aspect* right his ev’ning rays.”

Enough of such commentators*.—The celebrated Dr. Dee had a *spirit*, who would sometimes condescend to correct him, when peccant in *quantity*: and it had been kind of him to have a little assisted the *wights* above-mentioned.—Milton affected the *antique*; but it may seem more extraordinary, that the old accent should be adopted in *Hudibras*.

After all, The Double Falshood is superior to Theobald. One passage, and one only in the whole play, he pretended to have written:

“ ————— Strike up, my masters;
 “ But touch the strings with a religious softness:
 “ Teach sound to languish through the night’s dull ear,
 “ Till melancholy start from her lazy couch,
 “ And carelessness grow convert to attention.”

These lines were particularly admired; and his vanity could not resist the opportunity of claiming them: but his claim had been more easily allowed to *any other* part of the performance.

To whom then shall we ascribe it?—Somebody hath told us, who should seem to be a *nostrum-monger* by his argument, that, let *accents* be how they will, it is called an *original play of William Shakspeare* in the *King’s Patent* prefixed to Mr. Theobald’s edition, 1728, and consequently there *could* be no fraud in the matter. Whilst, on the contrary, the *Irish* laureat, Mr. Victor, remarks, (and were it true, it would certainly be decisive) that the plot is borrowed from a novel of Cervantes, not published till the year after Shakspeare’s death. But unluckily the same novel appears in a part of *Don Quixote*, which was printed in Spanish, 1605, and in English by Shelton, 1612.—The same reasoning however, which exculpated our author from The Yorkshire Tragedy, may be applied on the present occasion.

But you want *my* opinion:—and from every mark of

* See also a wrong accentuation of the word *aspect* in Mr. Ireland’s unmetrical, ungrammatical, harum-scarum Vortigern, which was damned at Drury Lane theatre, April—1796—the performance of a madman without a lucid interval.

style and manner, I make no doubt of ascribing it to Shirley. Mr. Langbaine informs us that he left some plays in MS.—These were written about the time of the Restoration, when the *accent* in question was more generally altered.

Perhaps the mistake arose from an *abbreviation* of the name. Mr. Dodsley knew not that the tragedy of Andromana was Shirley's, from the very same cause. Thus a whole stream of Biographers tells us, that Marston's plays were printed at London, 1633, "by the care of *William Shakespeare*, the famous comedian."—Here again I suppose, in some transcript, the real publisher's name, *William Sheares*, was *abbreviated*. No one hath protracted the life of Shakspeare beyond 1616, except Mr. Hume; who is pleased to add a year to it, in contradiction to all manner of evidence.

Shirley is spoken of with contempt in *Mac Flecknoe*; but his imagination is sometimes fine to an extraordinary degree. I recollect a passage in the fourth Book of the *Paradise Lost*, which hath been suspected of *imitation*, as a *prettiness* below the genius of Milton: I mean, where *Uriel* glides *backward and forward* to heaven on a *sun-beam*. Dr. Newton informs us, that this might possibly be hinted by a picture of Annibal Caracci in the King of France's cabinet; but I am apt to believe that Milton had been struck with a portrait in Shirley. Fernando, in the comedy of *The Brothers*, 1652, describes Jacinta at *vespers*:

" Her eye did seem to labour with a tear,
 " Which suddenly took birth, but overweigh'd
 " With its own swelling, drop'd upon her bosome;
 " Which by reflexion of her light, appear'd
 " As nature meant her sorrow for an ornament:
 " After, her looks grew cheerfull, and I saw
 " A smile shoot gracefull upward from her eyes,
 " As if they had gain'd a victory o'er grief,
 " And with it many *beams* twisted themselves,
 " Upon whose *golden threads* the angels walk
 " To and again from heaven.*——"

* Middleton, in an obscure play called *A Game at Chesse*, hath some very pleasing lines on a similar occasion:

" Upon those lips, the sweete fresh buds of youth,
 " The holy dewe of prayer lies like pearle,
 " Dropt from the opening eye-lids of the morne
 " Upon the bashfull rose.——"

You must not think me infected with the spirit of *Lauder*, if I give you another of Milton's imitations :

" ———— The swan *with arched neck*

" Between her white wings mantling proudly, rows

" Her state with oary feet." Book VII. v. 438, &c.

" The ancient poets, says Mr. Richardson, have not hit upon this beauty ; so lavish have they been in their descriptions of the *swan*. Homer calls the swan *long-necked*, *δελιχοδείρον* ; but how much more *pittoresque*, if he had *arched* this length of neck ?"

For *this beauty*, however, Milton was beholden to *Donne* ; whose name, I believe, at present is better known than his writings :

" ———— Like a ship in her full trim,

" A *swan*, so white that you may unto him

" Compare all whitenesse, but himsele to none,

" Glided along, and as he glided watch'd,

" And with his *arched neck* this poore fish catch'd.—"

Progresse of the Soul, st. 24.

Those highly finished landscapes, the Seasons, are indeed copied from nature, but Thomson sometimes recollected the hand of his master :

" ———— The stately sailing swan

" Gives out his snowy plumage to the gale ;

" And *arching proud* his neck with oary feet,

" Bears forward fierce, and guards his osier isle,

" Protective of his young.———"

But to return, as we say on other occasions.—Perhaps the advocates for Shakspeare's knowledge of the Latin language may be more successful. Mr. Gildon takes the van. " It is plain, that he was acquainted with the fables of antiquity very well : that some of the arrows of Cupid are pointed with lead, and others with gold, he found in Ovid ; and what he speaks of Dido, in Virgil : nor do I know any translation of these poets so ancient as Shakspeare's time." The passages on which these sagacious remarks are made, occur in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* ; and exhibit, we see, a clear proof of acquaintance with the Latin classicks.

But we are not answerable for Mr. Gildon's ignorance ; he might have been told of Caxton and Douglas, of

Surrey and Stanyhurst, of Phaer and Twyne, of Fleming and Golding, of Turberville and Churchyard ! but these fables were easily known without the help of either the originals or the translations. The fate of Dido had been sung very early by Gower, Chaucer, and Lydgate; Marlowe had even already introduced her to the stage: and Cupid's arrows appear with their characteristick differences in Surrey, in Sydney, in Spenser, and every sonnetteer of the time. Nay, their very names were exhibited long before in "The Romaunt of the Rose:" a work, you may venture to look into, notwithstanding Master Prynne hath so positively assured us, on the word of John Gerson, that the author is most certainly damned, if he did not care for a serious repentance*.

Mr. Whalley argues in the same manner, and with the same success. He thinks a passage in *The Tempest*,

" ————— High queen of state,
" Great Juno comes; I know her by her gait."

a remarkable instance of Shakspeare's knowledge of ancient poetick story; and that the hint was furnished by the *divûm incedo regina* of Virgil†.

You know, honest John Taylor, the *Water-poet*, declares that *he never learned his Accidence*, and that *Latin and*

* Had our zealous puritan been acquainted with the real crime of De Mehun, he would not have joined in the clamour against him. Poor Jehan, it seems, had raised the expectations of a monastery in France, by the legacy of a great chest, and the weighty contents of it; but it proved to be filled with nothing better than *vetches*. The friars enraged at the ridicule and disappointment, would not suffer him to have christian burial. See the Hon. Mr. Barrington's very learned and curious Observations on the Statutes, 4to. 1766, p. 24. From the *Annales d' Aquitaine*. Par. 1537.

Our author had his full share in distressing the spirit of this restless man. "Some Play-books are grown from *Quarto* into *Folio*; which yet bear so good a price and sale, that I cannot but with griefe relate it.—*Shakspeer's Plaies* are printed in the best Crowne-paper, far better than most *Bibles*!"

† Others would give up this passage for the *vera incessu patuit dea*; but I am not able to see any improvement in the matter: even supposing the poet had been speaking of Juno, and no previous translation were extant.

French were to him *Heathen-Greek*; yet by the help of Mr. Whalley's argument, I will prove him a learned man, in spite of every thing he may say to the contrary: for thus he makes a gallant address his lady:

"Most inestimable magazine of beauty—in whom the port and majesty of Juno, the wisdom of Jove's brained girle, and the feature of Cytherea*, have their domestical habitation."

In *The Merchant of Venice*, we have an oath "By two-headed Janus;" and here, says Dr. Warburton, Shakspeare shows his knowledge in the antique: and so again does the Water-poet, who describes Fortune,

"Like a Janus with a double face."

But Shakspeare hath somewhere a Latin motto, quoth Dr. Sewell; and so hath John Taylor, and a whole poem upon it into the bargain.

You perceive, my dear sir, how vague and indeterminate such arguments must be; for in fact this sweet swan of Thames, as Mr. Pope calls him, hath more scraps of Latin, and allusions to antiquity than are any where to be met with in the writings of Shakspeare. I am sorry to trouble you with trifles, yet what must be done, when grave men insist upon them?

It should seem to be the opinion of some modern criticks, that the personages of classick land begun only to be known

* This passage recalls to my memory a very extraordinary fact. A few years ago, at a great court on the continent, a countryman of ours of high rank and character, [Sir C. H. W.] exhibited with many other candidates his complimentary epigram on the birth day, and carried the prize in triumph:

"O Regina orbis prima et pulcherrima: ridens

"Es Venus, incedens Juno, Minerva loquens."

Literally stolen from Angerianus:

"Tres quondam nudas vidit Priameius heros

"Luce deas; video tres quoque luce deas.

"Hoc majus; tres uno in corpore: Cœlia ridens

"Est Venus, incedens Juno, Minerva loquens."

Delitiæ Ital. Poet. by Gruter, under the anagrammatic name of Ranutius Gherus, 1608, vol. i. p. 189.

Perhaps the latter part of the epigram was met with in a whimsical book, which had its day of fame, Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, fol. 1652, 6th edit. p. 520.

in England in the time of Shakspeare; or rather, that he particularly had the honour of introducing them to the notice of his countrymen.

For instance,—“*Rumour painted full of tongues,*” gives us a prologue to one of the parts of Henry the Fourth; and, says Dr. Dodd, Shakspeare had doubtless a view to either Virgil or Ovid in their description of Fame.

But why so? Stephen Hawes, in his *Pastime of Pleasure* had long before exhibited her in the same manner,

“A goodly lady envyroned about
“With *tongues* of fyre.—*”

and so had Sir Thomas More in one of his Pageants†:

“*Fame* I am called, mervayle you nothing
“Though with *tonges* I am compassed all rounde.”

not to mention her elaborate portrait by Chaucer, in *The Boke of Fame*; and by John Higgins, one of the assistants in *The Mirrour for Magistrates*, in his *Legend of King Albanacte*.

A very liberal writer on the Beauties of Poetry, who had been more conversant in the ancient literature of other countries, than his own, “cannot but wonder, that a poet, whose classical images are composed of the finest parts, and breathe the very spirit of ancient mythology, should pass for being illiterate:

“See, what a grace was seated on this brow!
“Hyperion’s curls: the front of Jove himself:
“An eye like Mars to threaten and command:
“A station like the herald Mercury,
“New lighted on a heaven-kissing hill.” *Hamlet*.

Illiterate is an ambiguous term: the question is, whether poetick history could be only known by an adept in languages. It is no reflection on this ingenious gentleman, when I say, that I use on this occasion the words of a *better* critick, who yet was not willing to carry the *illiteracy* of our poet too far:—“They who are in such astonishment at the *learning* of Shakspeare, forget that the pagan imagery was familiar to all the poets of his

* Cap. 1. 4to. 1556.

† Amongst “the things, which Mayster More wrote in his youth for his pastime,” prefixed to his *Workes*, 1557, Fol.

time; and that abundance of this sort of learning was to be picked up from almost every English book, that he could take into his hands." For not to insist upon Stephen Bateman's "Golden Booke of the Leaden Goddes," 1577, and several other laborious compilations on the subject, all this and much more mythology might as perfectly have been learned from the "Testament of Creseide*," and the "Fairy Queen†," as from a regular Pantheon or Polymetis himself.

Mr. Upton, not contented with *heathen* learning, when he finds it in the text, must necessarily super-add it, when it appears to be wanting; because Shakspeare most certainly hath lost it by accident!

In Much Ado about Nothing, Don Pedro says of the insensible Benedict, "He hath twice or thrice cut Cupid's bow-string, and the little *hangman* dare not shoot at him."

This mythology is not recollected in the ancients, and therefore the critick hath no doubt but his author wrote—"Henchman,—a *page*, *pusio*: and *this* word seeming too hard for the printer, he translated the little urchin into a *hangman*, a character no way belonging to him."

But this character was not borrowed from the ancients;—it came from the Arcadia of Sir Philip Sidney:

"Millions of yeares this old drivell Cupid lives;
 "While still more wretch, more wicked he doth prove;
 "Till now at length that Jove an office gives,
 "(At Juno's suite who much did Argus love)
 "In this our world a *hangman* for to be
 "Of all those fooles that will have all they see."

B. II. c. 14.

I know it may be objected on the authority of such biographers as Theophilus Cibber, and the writer of the Life of Sir Philip, prefixed to the modern editions; that the Arcadia was not published before 1613, and consequently too late for this imitation: but I have a copy in

* Printed amongst the works of Chaucer, but really written by Robert Henderson, or *Henryson*, according to other authorities.

† It is observable that *Hyperion* is used by Spenser with the same error in *quantity*.

my own possession, printed for W. Ponsonbie, 1590, 4to. which hath escaped the notice of the industrious Ames, and the rest of our typographical antiquaries.

Thus likewise every word of antiquity is to be cut down to the classical standard.

In a note on the Prologue to *Troilus and Cressida*, (which, by the way, is not met with in the *quarto*,) Mr. Theobald informs us, that the very *names* of the gates of Troy, have been barbarously demolished by the editors : and a deal of learned dust he makes in setting them right again ; much however to Mr. Heath's satisfaction. Indeed the learning is modestly withdrawn from the later editions, and we are quietly instructed to read,

“ Dardan, and Thymbria, Ilia, Scæa, Troian,
“ And Antenorides.”

But had he looked into the *Troy boke* of Lydgate, instead of puzzling himself with Dares Phrygius, he would have found the horrid demolition to have been neither the work of Shakspeare nor his editors :

“ Thereto his cyte | compassed enuyrowne
“ Hadde gates VI to entre into the towne :
“ The first of all | and strengest eke with all,
“ Largest also | and moste pryncypall,
“ Of mighty byldyng | alone pereless,
“ Was by the kynge called | Dardanydes ;
“ And in storye | lyke as it is founde,
“ Tymbria | was named the seconde ;
“ And the thyarde | called Helyas,
“ The fourthe gate | hyghte also Cetheas ;
“ She fifthe Trojana | the syxth Anthonydes,
“ Stronge and mighty | both in werre and pes *.”

Lond. empr. by R. Pynson, 1513, fol. B. II. ch. xi.

Our excellent friend Mr. Hurd hath borne a noble

* The *Troy Boke* was somewhat modernized, and reduced into regular stanzas, about the beginning of the last century, under the name of “ The Life and Death of Hector—who fought a hundred mayne Battailles in open Field against the Grecians ; wherein there were slaine on both Sides Fourteene Hundred and Sixe Thousand Fourscore and Sixe Men.” Fol. no date. This work, Dr. Fuller and several other criticks, have erroneously quoted as the *original* ; and observe in con-

testimony on our side of the question. "Shakspeare," says this true critick, "owed the felicity of freedom from the bondage of classical superstition, to the *want* of what is called the *advantage* of a learned education.—This, as well as a vast superiority of genius, hath contributed to lift this astonishing man to the glory of being esteemed the most original *thinker* and *speaker*, since the times of Homer." And hence indisputably the amazing variety of style and manner, unknown to all other writers: an argument of *itself* sufficient to emancipate Shakspeare from the supposition of a *classical training*. Yet, to be honest, *one* imitation is *fastened* on our poet; which hath been insisted upon likewise by Mr. Upton and Mr. Whal-

sequence, that "if Chaucer's *coin* were of *greater weight* for *deeper learning*, Lydgate's were of a more *refined standard* for *purer language*: so that one might mistake him for a modern writer!"

Let me here make an observation for the benefit of the next editor of Chaucer. Mr. Urry, probably misled by his predecessor, Speght, was determined, *Procrustes-like*, to *force* every line in The Canterbury Tales to the same standard: but a precise number of syllables was not the object of our old poets. Lydgate, after the example of his master, very fairly acknowledges,

"Well wot I | moche thing is wronge,

"Falsely metryd | both of short and longe."

and Chaucer himself was persuaded, that the *rime* might possibly be

"———— Somewhat agreáble,

"Though some verse faile in a sylláble."

In short, the attention was directed to the *cæsural pause*, as the *grammarians* call it; which is carefully marked in every line of Lydgate: and Gascoigne in his Certayne Notes of Instruction concerning the making of Verse, observes very truly of Chaucer, "Whosoeuer do peruse and well consider his workes, he shall find, that although his lines are not always of one selfe same number of syllables, yet beyng redde by one that hath understanding, the longest verse and that which hath most syllables in it, *will* fall to the eare correspondent unto that which hath fewest syllables in it: and likewise that whiche hathe in it fewest syllables shall be found yet to consist of wordes that hath suche naturall sounde, as may seeme equall in length to a verse which hath many moe syllables of lighter accents." 4to. 1575.

ley. You remember it in the famous speech of Claudio in Measure for Measure :

“ Ay, but to die and go we know not where ! ” &c.

Most certainly the ideas of “ a spirit bathing in fiery floods,” of residing “ in thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice,” or of being “ imprisoned in the viewless winds,” are not *original* in our author ; but I am not sure, that they came from the *Platonick-hell* of Virgil*. The monks also had their hot and their cold hell : “ The fyrste is fyre that ever brenneth, and never gyveth lighte,” says an old homily†:—“ the seconde is passing colde, that yf a grete hylle of fyre were casten therin, it sholde torn to yce.” One of their legends, well remembered in the time of Shakspeare, gives us a dialogue between a bishop and a soul tormented in a piece of ice, which was brought to cure a *grete brenning heate* in his foote‡ : take care you do not interpret this the *gout*, for I remember Mr. Menage quotes a *canon* upon us :

Si quis dixerit episcopum *podagra* laborare, anathema sit.

Another tells us of the soul of a monk fastened to a rock, which the winds were to blow about for a twelve-month, and purge of its enormities. Indeed this doctrine was before now introduced into poetick fiction, as you may see in a poem “ where the lover declareth his pains to exceed far the pains of hell,” among the many miscellaneous ones subjoined to the works of Surrey. Nay, a very learned and inquisitive Brother-Antiquary, our Greek Professor§, hath observed to me on the authority of Blefkenius, that this was the ancient opinion of the inhabitants of Iceland||; who were certainly very little read either in the *poet* or the *philosopher*.

* [“ ————— Alia panduntur inanes
“ Suspensæ ad ventos : aliis sub gurgite vasto
“ Infectum eluitur scelus, aut exuritur igni.”

† At the ende of the festyuall drawn oute of *Legenda aurea*, 4to. 1508. It was printed by Caxton, 1483, “ in helpe of such clerkes who exeuse theym for defaute of bokes, and also by symplenes of connynges.”

‡ On all soules daye, p. 152.

§ Mr. afterwards Dr. Lort.

|| *Islandiæ Descript.* Ludg. Bat. 1607, p. 46.

After all, Shakspeare's curiosity might lead him to *translations*. Gawin Douglas really changes the *Platonick-hell* into the "punytion of saulis in purgatory:" and it is observable, that when the Ghost informs Hamlet of his doom there,

"Till the foul crimes done in his days of nature
"Are burnt and purg'd away.—"

the expression is very similar to the bishop's: I will give you his version as concisely as I can; "It is a nedeful thyng to suffer panis and torment—sum in the wyndis, sum under the watter, and in the fire uthir sum:—thus the mony vices—

"Contrakkit in the corporis be *done away*
"And purgit——" Sixte Booke of Eneados, fol. p. 191.

It seems, however, "that Shakspeare *himself* in The Tempest hath translated some expressions of Virgil: witness the *O dea certe*." I presume, we are here directed to the passage, where Ferdinand says of Miranda, after hearing the songs of Ariel,

"—— Most sure, the goddess
"On whom these airs attend."

and so *very small Latin* is sufficient for this formidable translation, that if it be thought any honour to our poet, I am loath to deprive him of it; but his honour is not built on such a sandy foundation. Let us turn to a *real translator*, and examine whether the idea might not be fully comprehended by an English reader; *supposing* it necessarily borrowed from Virgil. Hexameters in our own language are almost forgotten; we will quote therefore this time from Stanyhurst:

"O to thee, fayre virgin, what terme may rightly be fitted?
"Thy tongue, thy visage no mortal frayltie resembleth.
"—— *No doubt, a godesse!*" Edit. 1583.

Gabriel Harvey desired only to be "*epitaph'd*, the inventor of the English *hexameter*," and for a while every one would be *halting on Roman feet*; but the ridicule of our fellow-collegian Hall, in one of his Satires, and the

reasoning of Daniel, in his Defence of Rhyme against Campion, presently reduced us to our original Gothick.

But to come nearer the purpose, what will you say, if I can show you, that Shakspeare, when, in the favourite phrase, he had a Latin poet *in his eye*, most assuredly made use of a translation?

Prospero, in *The Tempest*, begins the address to his attendant *spirits*,

“Ye elves of hills, of standing lakes, and groves.”

This speech, Dr. Warburton rightly observes to be borrowed from Medea in Ovid: and “it proves,” says Mr. Holt*, “beyond contradiction, that Shakspeare was perfectly acquainted with the sentiments of the ancients on the subject of enchantments.” The original lines are these:

Auræque, et venti, montesque, amnesque, lacusque,
Diique omnes nemorum, diique omnes noctis adeste.

It happens, however, that the translation by Arthur Golding† is by no means literal, and Shakspeare hath closely followed it:

“Ye ayres and winds; *ye elves of hills*, of brookes, of woods
alone,

“*Of standing lakes*, and of the night approche ye everych
one.”

I think it is unnecessary to pursue this any further; especially as more powerful arguments await us.

In *The Merchant of Venice*, the Jew, as an apology for his cruelty to Antonio, rehearses many *sympathies* and *antipathies* for which *no reason can be rendered*:

“Some love not a gaping pig——

“And others when the *bagpipe* sings i’t’h’ nose,

“Cannot contain their urine for *affection*.”

This incident, Dr. Warburton supposes to be taken

* In some remarks on *The Tempest*, published under the quaint title of “An Attempt to rescue that aunciente English Poet and Play-write, Maister Williaume Shakspeare, from the many Errours, faulsely charged upon him by certaine new-fangled Wittes. Lond. 8vo. 1749, p. 81.

† His work is dedicated to the Earl of Leicester in a long epistle in verse, from Berwick, April 20, 1567.

from a passage in Scaliger's *Exercitationes* against Cardan: "Narrabo tibi jocosam sympathiam *Reguli Vasconis* equitis: is dum viveret audito *phormingis* sono, urinam illico facere cogeбatur."—"And," proceeds the Doctor, "to make this jocular story still more ridiculous, Shakspeare, I suppose, translated *phorminx* by *bagpipes*."

Here we seem fairly caught;—for Scaliger's work was never, as the term goes, *done into English*. But luckily in an old translation from the French of Peter le Loire, entitled, "A Treatise of Specters, or straunge Sights, Visions, and Apparitions, appearing sensibly unto Men," we have this identical story from Scaliger: and what is still more, a marginal note gives us in all probability the very fact alluded to, as well as the word of Shakspeare: "Another gentleman of this quality liued of late in Deuon neere Excester, who could not endure the playing on a *bagpipe**."

We may just add, as some observation hath been made upon it, that *affection* in the sense of *sympathy* was formerly *technical*; and so used by Lord Bacon, Sir Kenelm Digby, and many other writers.

A single word in Queen Catherine's character of Wolsey, in Henry VIII. is brought by the Doctor as another argument for the learning of Shakspeare:

"——— He was a man
 "Of an unbounded stomach, ever ranking
 "Himself with princes; one that by *suggestion*
 "Ty'd all the kingdom. Simony was fair play.
 "His own opinion was his law: i'th' presence
 "He would say untruths, and be ever double
 "Both in his words and meaning. He was never,
 "But where he meant to ruin, pitiful.
 "His promises were, as he then was, mighty;
 "But his performance, as he now is, nothing.
 "Of his own body he was ill, and gave
 "The clergy ill example."

"The word *suggestion*," says the critick, "is here used

* M. Bayle hath delineated the singular character of our *fantastical* author. His work was originally translated by one Zacharie Jones. My edit. is in 4to. 1605, with an anonymous Dedication to the King: the Devonshire story was therefore well

with great propriety, and *seeming* knowledge of the Latin tongue:" and he proceeds to settle the sense of it from *the late Roman writers and their glossers*. But Shakspeare's knowledge was from Holinshed, whom he follows *verbatim*:

" This cardinal was of a great stomach, for he compted himself equal with princes, and by craftie *suggestion* got into his hands innumerable treasure: he forced little on simonie, and was not pitifull, and stood affectionate in his own opinion: in open presence he would lie and seie untruth, and was double both in speech and meaning: he would promise much and performe little: he was vicious of his bodie, and gaue the clergie euil example." Edit. 1587, p. 922.

Perhaps after this quotation, you may not think, that Sir Thomas Hanmer, who reads *Tyth'd*—instead of—*Ty'd all the kingdom*, deserves quite so much of Dr. Warburton's severity.—Indisputably the passage, like every other in the speech, is intended to express the meaning of the parallel one in the chronicle: it cannot therefore be credited, that any man, when the *original* was produced, should still choose to defend a *cant* acceptation; and inform us, perhaps, *seriously*, that in *gaming* language, from I know not what practice, to *tye* is to *equal*! A sense of the word, as far as I have yet found, *unknown* to our old writers; and, if *known*, would not surely have been used in this place by our author.

But let us turn from conjecture to Shakspeare's authorities. Hall, from whom the above description is copied by Holinshed, is very explicit in the demands of the Cardinal, who having insolently told the Lord Mayor and Aldermen, " For sothe I thinke, that *halfe* your substaunce were to litle," assures them by way of comfort at the end of his harangue, that *upon an average* the *tythe* should be sufficient; " Sers, speake not to breake that

known in the time of Shakspeare.—The passage from Scaliger is likewise to be met with in "The Optick Glasse of Humours," written, I believe, by T. Wombwell *; and in several other places.

* " So I imagined from a note of Mr. Baker's, but I have since seen a copy in the library of Canterbury Cathedral, printed 1607, and ascribed to T. Walkington, of St. John's, Cambridge." Dr. Farmer's MSS. REED.

thyng that is concluded, for *some* shall not paie the *tenth* parte, and *some* more.”—And again: “Thei saied, the Cardinall by visitacions, makyng of abbottes, probates of testamantes, graunting of faculties, licences, and other pollynges in his courtes legantines, had made his *threasure egall with the kinges*.” Edit. 1248, p. 138, and 143.

Skelton*, in his *Why come ye not to Court*, gives

* His poems are printed with the title of “Pithy, Pleasaunt, and Profitable Workes of Maister Skelton Poet Laureate.”—“But,” says Mr. Cibber, after several other writers, “how or by what interest he was made Laureat, or whether it was by a title he assumed to himself, cannot be determined.” This is an error pretty generally received, and it may be worth our while to remove it.

A facetious author says somewhere, that a poet laureat, in the modern idea, is a gentleman, who hath an annual stipend for reminding us of the New Year, and the Birth-day: but formerly a Poet Laureat was a real university graduate.

“Skelton wore the laurell wreath,

“And past in *schools* ye knoe.”

says Churchyarde in a poem prefixed to his works. And Master Caxton in his Preface to *The Boke of Eneydos*, 1490, hath a passage, which well deserves to be quoted without abridgment: “I praye mayster John Skelton, *late created poete laureate in the uniuersite of Oxenforde*, to oversee and correcte thys sayd booke, and taddresse and expowne whereas shall be founde faulte, to theym that shall requyre it; for hym I knowe for suffycient to expowne and Englysshe every dyfficulte that is therein; for he hath late translated the epystles of Tulle, and the book of Dyodorus Syculus, and diuerse other workes out of Latyn into Englyshe, not in rude and old language, but in pollyshed and ornate termes, craftely, as he that hath redde Vyrghyle, Ouyde, Tullye, and all the other noble poets and oratours, to me unknowen: and also he hath redde the ix muses, and understands their musical scyences, and to whom of them echè scyence is appropred; I suppose he hath dronken of *Elycons* well!”

I find, from Mr. Baker’s MSS. that our *laureat* was admitted ad eundem at Cambridge, “An Dom. 1493, & Hen. 7. nono. Conceditur *Johi Skelton* Poete in partibus transmarinis atque Oxon. Laureâ ornato, ut apud nos eâdem decoraretur.” And afterward, “An. 1504-5 Conceditur *Johi Shelton*, Poetæ Laureat. quod possit stare eodem gradu hic, quo stetit Oxoniis, & quod possit uti habitu sibi concesso à Principe.”

See likewise Dr. Knight’s *Life of Colet*, p. 122. And *Recherches sur les Poetes couronnez*, par M. l’Abbé du Resnel, in the *Memoires de Litterature*, vol. x. Paris, 4to. 1736.

us, after his rambling manner, a curious character of Wolsey:

“ ————By and by
 “ He will drynke us so dry
 “ And sucke us so nye
 “ That men shall scantly
 “ Haue penny or halpennye
 “ God saue hys noble grace
 “ And graunt him a place
 “ Endlesse to dwel
 “ With the deuill of hel
 “ For and he were there
 “ We nead neuer feare
 “ Of the feendes blacke
 “ For I undertake
 “ He wold so brag and crake
 “ That he wold than make
 “ The deuils to quake
 “ To shudder and to shake
 “ Lyke a fier drake
 “ And with a cole rake
 “ Bruse them on a brake
 “ And binde them to a stake
 “ And set hel on fyre
 “ At his owne desire
 “ He is such a grym syre!” Edit. 1568.

Mr. Upton and some other criticks have thought it very *scholar-like* in Hamlet to swear the Centinels on a *sword*: but this is for ever met with. For instance, in the *Passus Primus* of Pierce Plowman :

“ Daud in his daies dubbed knightes,
 “ And did hem *swere on her sword* to serue truth euer.”

And in *Hieronymo*, the common butt of our author and the wits of the time, says Lorenzo to Pedringano,

“ Swear on this cross, that what thou sayst is true—
 “ But if I prove thee perjured and unjust,
 “ This very *sword*, whereon thou took'st thine oath,
 “ Shall be the worker of thy tragedy!”

We have therefore no occasion to go with Mr. Garrick as far as the French of Brantôme to illustrate this ceremony*: a *gentleman*, who will be always allowed the *first commen-*

* Mr. Johnson's edit. vol. viii. p. 171.

tator on Shakspeare, when he does not carry us beyond *himself*.

Mr. Upton, however, in the next place, produces a passage from Henry VI. whence he argues it to be very plain, that our author had not only *read Cicero's Offices*, but even more *critically* than many of the editors :

“ ————— This villain here,

“ Being captain of a *pinnace*, threatens more

“ Than Bargulus, the strong Illyrian pirate.”

So the *wight*, he observes with great exultation, is named by Cicero in the editions of Shakspeare's time, “Bargulus Illyrius latro;” though the modern editors have chosen to call him Bardylis :—“and *thus* I found it in *two* MSS.”

—And *thus* he might have found it in *two* translations, before Shakspeare was born. Robert Whyntinton, 1533, calls him, “Bargulus a pirate upon the see of Illiry;” and Nicholas Grimald, about twenty years afterward, “Bargulus the Illyrian robber*.”

But it had been easy to have checked Mr. Upton's exultation, by observing, that Bargulus does not appear in the *quarto*.—Which also is the case with some fragments of Latin verses, in the different *parts* of this *doubtful* performance.

It is scarcely worth mentioning, that two or three more Latin passages, which are met with in our author, are immediately transcribed from the story or chronicle before him. Thus, in Henry V. whose right to the kingdom of France is copiously demonstrated by the Archbishop :

“ ————— There is no bar

“ To make against your highness' claim to France,

“ But this which they produce from Pharamond :

“ In terram Salicam mulieres nē succedant ;

“ No woman shall succeed in Salike land :

“ Which Salike land the French unjustly gloze

“ To be the realm of France, and Pharamond

“ The founder of this law and female bar.

“ Yet their own authors faithfully affirm,

“ That the land Salike lies in Germany,

“ Between the floods of Sala and of Elve,” &c.

Archbishop Chichelie, says Holinshed, “did much inueie

* I have met with a writer who tells us, that a translation of the *Offices* was printed by Caxton, in the year 1481 : but such

against the surmised and false fained law Salike, which the Frenchmen alledge euer against the kings of England in barre of their just title to the crowne of France. The very words of that supposed law are these, In terram Salicam mulieres nè succedant, that is to saie, Into the Salike land let not women succeed; which the French glossers expound to be the realm of France, and that this law was made by King Pharamond: whereas yet their owne authors affirme, that the land Salike is in Germanie, between the rivers of Elbe and Sala, &c." p. 545.

It hath lately been repeated from Mr. Guthrie's "Essay on English Tragedy," that the *portrait* of Macbeth's *wife* is copied from Buchanan, "whose spirit, as well as words, is translated into the play of Shakspeare: and it had signified nothing to have pored only on Holinshed for *facts*." — "Animus etiam, per se ferox, prope quotidianis conviciis uxoris (quæ omnium consiliorum ei erat conscia) stimulabatur."—This is the whole, that Buchanan says of the *lady*; and truly I see no more *spirit* in the Scotch, than in the English chronicler. "The wordes of the three weird sisters also greatly encouraged him, [to the murder of Duncan] but specially his wife lay sore upon him to attempt the thing, as she that was very ambitious, brenning in unquenchable desire to beare the name of a queene." Edit. 1577, p. 244.

This part of Holinshed is an abridgement of Johne Bellenden's translation of the *noble clerk*, Hector Boece, imprinted at Edinburgh, in fol. 1541. I will give the passage as it is found there: "His wyfe impacient of lang tary (*as all wemen ar*) specially quhare they ar desirus of ony purpos, gaif hym gret artation to pursew the thrid weird, that sche micht be ane quene, calland hym oft tymis febyl cownt and nocht desyrus of honouris, sen he durst not assaile the thing with manheid and curage, quhilk is offerit to hym be beniuolence of fortoun. Howbeit sindry otheris hes assailezeit sic thinges afore with maist terribyl jeopardyis, quhen they had not sic sickernes to succed in the end of thair lauboris as he had had." P. 173.

a book never existed. It is a mistake for Tullius of old Age, printed with The Boke of Frendshipe, by John Tiptoft, Earl of Worccster. I believe the former was translated by William Wyrcestre, alias Botoner.

But we can *demonstrate*, that Shakspeare had not the story from Buchanan. According to *him*, the weird-sisters salute Macbeth, “*Una Angusiæ Thamum, altera Moraviæ, tertia regem.*”——Thane of Angus, and of Murray, &c. but according to Holinshed, immediately from Bellenden, as it stands in Shakspeare: “The first of them spake and sayde, All hayle Makbeth, thane of Glamis,—the second of them said, Hayle Makbeth, thane of Cawder; but the third sayde, All hayle Makbeth, that hereafter shall be *king of Scotland.*” P. 243.

“ 1. *Witch.* All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, thane of Glamis!

“ 2. *Witch.* All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, thane of Cawdor!

“ 3. *Witch.* All hail, Macbeth! that shall be *king* hereafter!”

Here too our poet found the equivocal predictions, on which his hero so fatally depended. “He had learned of certain wysards, how that he ought to take heede of Macduffe;—and surely hereupon had he put Macduffe to death, but a certaine witch whom he had in great trust, had tolde, that he should neuer be slain with *man born of any woman*, nor vanquished till the wood of Bernane came to the castell of Dunsinane.” P. 244. And the scene between Malcom and Macduff in the fourth Act is almost literally taken from the Chronicle.

Macbeth was certainly one of Shakspeare's latest productions, and it might possibly have been suggested to him by a little performance on the same subject at Oxford, before King James, 1605. I will transcribe my notice of it from Wake's *Rex Platonius*: “*Fabulæ ansam dedit antiqua de Regiâ prosapiâ historiola apud Scoto-Britannos celebrata, quæ narrat tres olim Sibyllas occurrisse duobus Scotiæ proceribus, Macbetho et Banchoni, et illum prædixisse Regem futurum, sed Regem nullum geniturum; hunc Regem non futurum, sed Reges geniturum multos. Vaticinii veritatem rerum eventus comprobavit. Banchonis enim è stirpe potentissimus Jacobus oriundus.*” P. 29.

A stronger argument hath been brought from the plot of Hamlet. Dr. Grey and Mr. Whalley assure us, that for *this*, Shakspeare *must* have read Saxo Grammaticus in Latin, for no translation hath been made into any modern

language. But the truth is, he did not take it from Saxo at all; a novel called *The Hystorie of Hamlet*, was his original: a fragment of which, in *black letter*, I have been favoured with by a very curious and intelligent gentleman, [Mr. Capell] to whom the lovers of Shakspeare will some time or other owe great obligations.

It hath indeed been said, that “*IF such an history exists*, it is almost impossible that any poet unacquainted with the Latin language (supposing his perceptive faculties to have been ever so acute,) could have caught the characteristic madness of Hamlet, described by Saxo Grammaticus*, so happily as it is delineated by Shakspeare.

Very luckily, our fragment gives us a part of Hamlet's speech to his *mother*, which sufficiently replies to this observation:—“It was not without cause, and juste occasion, that my gestures, countenances and words seeme to proceed from a madman, and that I desire to haue all men esteeme mee wholly depriued of sence and reasonable understanding, bycause I am well assured, that he that hath made no conscience to kill his owne brother, (accustomed to murthers, and allured with desire of gouvernement without controll in his treasons,) will not spare to saue himselfe with the like crueltie, in the blood, and flesh of the loyns of his brother, by him massacred: and therefore it is better for me to fayne madnesse then to use my right senses as nature hath bestowed them upon me. The bright shining clearnes therof I am forced to hide vnder this shadow of dissimulation, as the sun doth his beams vnder some great cloud, when the wether in summer time ouercasteth: the face of a mad man, serueth to couer my gallant countenance, and the gestures of a fool are fit for me, to the end that guiding my self wisely therin I may preserue my life for the Danes and the memory of my late deceased father, for that the desire of reuenging his death is so ingrauen in my heart, that if I dye not shortly, I hope to take such and so great vengeance, that these countryes shall for euer speake thereof. Neuertheless I

* “*Falsitatis enim (Hamlethus) alienus haberi cupidus, ita astutiam veriloquio permiscebat, ut nec dictis veracitas deesset, nec acuminis modus verorum iudicio proderetur.*” This is quoted, as it had been before, in Mr. Guthrie's *Essay on Tragedy*, with a *small* variation from the *Original*. See edit. fol. 1644, p. 50.

must stay the time, meanes, and occasion, lest by making ouer great hast, I be now the cause of mine own sodaine ruine and ouerthrow, and by that meanes, end, before I beginne to effect my hearts desire: hee that hath to doe with a wicked, disloyall, cruell, and discourteous man, must vse craft, and politike inuentions, such as fine witte can best imagine, not to discouer his interprise: for seeing that by force I cannot affect my desire, reason alloweth me by dissimulation, subiltie, and secret practises to proceed therein."

But to put the matter out of all question, my communicative friend, above-mentioned, Mr. Capell, (for why should I not give myself the credit of his name?) hath been fortunate enough to procure from the collection of the Duke of Newcastle, a *complete* copy of the Hystorie of Hamblet, which proves to be a translation from the French of Belleforest; and he tells me, that "all the chief incidents of the play, and all the capital characters are there in *embryo*, after a rude and barbarous manner: sentiments indeed there are none, that Shakspeare could borrow; nor any expression but *one*, which is, where Hamlet kills Polonius behind the arras: in doing which he is made to cry out, as in the play, "*a rat, a rat!*"—So much for Saxo Grammaticus!

It is scarcely conceivable, how industriously the puritanical zeal of the last age exerted itself in destroying, amongst better things, the innocent amusements of the former. Numberless *Tales* and *Poems* are alluded to in old books, which are now perhaps no where to be found. Mr. Capell informs me, (and he is in these matters, the most able of all men to give information,) that our author appears to have been beholden to some novels, which he hath yet only seen in French or Italian: but he adds, "to say they are not in some English dress, prosaic or metrical, and perhaps with circumstances nearer to his stories, is what I will not take upon me to do: nor indeed is what I believe; but rather the contrary, and that time and accident will bring some of them to light, if not all."—

W. Painter, at the conclusion of the second *Tome* of his *Palace of Pleasure*, 1567, *advertises* the reader, "because sodaynly (contrary to expectation) this volume is risen to a greater heape of leaues, I doe omit for this present time *sundry nouels* of mery deuise, reseruing the

same to be joyned with the rest of an other part, wherein shall succcede the remnant of Bandello, specially sutch (suffrable) as the learned French man François de Belleforest hath selected, and the choysrest done in the Italian. Some also out of Erizzo, Ser Giouanni Florentino, Parabosco, Cynthio, Straparole, Sansouino, and the best liked out of the Queene of Nauarre, and other authors. Take these in good part, with those that haue and shall come forth."—But I am not able to find that a *third tome* was ever published: and it is very probable, that the interest of his booksellers, and more especially the prevailing mode of the time, might lead him afterward to print his *sundry novels* separately. If this were the case, it is no wonder, that such *fugitive pieces* are recovered with difficulty: when the *two tomes*, which Tom. Rawlinson would have called *justa volumina*, are almost annihilated. Mr. Ames, who searched after books of this sort with the utmost avidity, most certainly had not seen them, when he published his *Typographical Antiquities*; as appears from his blunders about them: and possibly I myself might have remained in the same predicament, had I not been favoured with a copy by my generous friend, Mr. Lort.

Mr. Colman, in the Preface to his elegant translation of Terence, hath offered some arguments for the learning of Shakspeare, which have been retailed with much confidence, since the appearance of Mr. Johnson's edition.

"Besides the resemblance of particular passages scattered up and down in different plays, it is well known, that the Comedy of Errors is in great measure founded on the *Menæchmi* of Plautus; but I do not recollect ever to have seen it observed, that the disguise of the Pedant in *The Taming of the Shrew*, and his assuming the name and character of Vincentio, seem to be evidently taken from the disguise of the Sycophanta in the *Trinummus* of the said author*;

* This observation of Mr. Colman is quoted by his very ingenious colleague, Mr. Thornton, in his translation of this play: who further remarks, in another part of it, that a passage in *Romeo and Juliet*, where Shakspeare speaks of the *contradiction* in the nature of *love*, is very much in the manner of his author:

"Amor—mores hominum moros et morosos efficit.

"Minus placet quod suadet, quod disuadet placet.

"Quom inopia'st, cupias, quando ejus copia'st, tum non velis," &c.

and there is a quotation from the Eunuch of Terence also, so familiarly introduced into the dialogue of *The Taming*

Which he translates with ease and elegance,

- “ ————— Love makes a man a fool,
 “ Hard to be pleas’d.—What you’d persuade him to,
 “ He likes not, and embraces that, from which
 “ You would dissuade him.—What there is a lack of,
 “ That will he covet; when ’tis in his power,
 “ He’ll none on’t.—” Act III. Sc. III.

Let us now turn to the passage in Shakspeare:

- “ — O brawling love! O loving hate!—
 “ O heavy lightness! serious vanity!
 “ Mis-shapen chaos of well-seeming forms!
 “ Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health!
 “ Still-waking sleep! that is not what it is!”

Shakspeare, I am sure, in the opinion of Mr. Thornton, did not want a Plautus to teach him the workings of nature; nor are his *parallelisms* produced with any such implication: but, I suppose, a peculiarity appears here in the manner of expression, which however was extremely the humour of the age. Every *sonnetteer* characterises *love* by contrarieties. Watson begins one of his *canzonets*,

- “ Love is a sowre delight, a sugred grieve,
 “ A living death, an euer-dying life,” &c.

Turberville makes *Reason* harangue against it in the same manner:

- “ A fierie frost, a flame that frozen is with ise!
 “ A heavie burden light to beare! a vertue fraught with
 vice!” &c.

Immediately from *The Romaunt of the Rose*:

- “ Loue it is an hatefull pees
 “ A free acquitaunce without reles—
 “ An heavie burthen light to beare
 “ A wicked wawe awaie to weare:
 “ And health full of maladie
 “ And charitie full of envie—
 “ A laughter that is weping aie
 “ Rest that trauaileth night and daie,” &c.

This kind of *antithesis* was very much the taste of the Provençal and Italian poets; perhaps it might be hinted by the Ode of Sappho, preserved by Longinus: Petrarch is full of it:

Pace non trovo, et non hò da far guerra,
 Et temo, et spero, et ardo, et son un ghiaccio,
 Et volo sopra'l cielo, et giaccio in terra,
 Et nulla stringo, et tuttòl mondo abbraccio, &c.

Sonetto 105.

Sir Thomas Wyat gives a translation of this Sonnet, without any

of the Shrew, that I think it puts the question of Shakspeare's having read the Roman comick poets in the *original* language out of all doubt,

Redime te captum, quam queas, minimo.

With respect to *resemblances*, I shall not trouble you any further.—That the Comedy of Errors is founded on the Menæchmi, it is notorious: nor is it less so, that a translation of it by W. W. perhaps William Warner, the author of Albion's England, was extant in the time of Shakspeare*; though Mr. Upton, and some other advocates for his learning, have cautiously dropt the mention of it. Besides this, (if indeed it were different,) in the Gesta Grayorum, the Christmas Revels of the Grays-Inn Gentlemen, 1594, “a *Comedy of Erorrs* like to Plautus his *Menechmus* was played by the Players.” And the same hath been suspected to be the subject of the “goodlie Comedie of Plautus,” acted at Greenwich before the King and Queen in 1520; as we learn from Hall and Holinshed:—Riccoboni highly compliments the English on opening their stage so well; but unfortunately, Cavendish in his Life of Wolsey, calls it, an “excellent Interlude in Latine.” About the same time it was exhibited in German at Nuremburgh, by the celebrated Hanssach, the *shoemaker*.

“But a character in the Taming of the Shrew is borrowed from the Trinummus, and no translation of *that* was extant.”

Mr. Colman indeed hath been better employed: but if he had met with an old comedy, called Supposes, translated from Ariosto by George Gascoigne†, he certainly

notice of the *original*, under the title of “Description of the contrarious Passions in a Louer,” amongst the Songes and Sonettes, by the Earle of Surrey, and others, 1574.

* It was published in 4to. 1595. The printer of Langbaine, p. 524, hath accidentally given the date, 1515, which hath been copied implicitly by Gildon, Theobald, Cooke, and several others. Warner is now almost forgotten, yet the old criticks esteemed him one of “our chiefe heroical *makers*.”—Meres informs us, that he had “heard him termed of the best wits of both our Universities, our English Homer.”

† His works were first collected under the singular title of “A hundredth sundrie Flowres bounde up in one small Poesie.

would not have appealed to Plautus. Thence Shakspeare borrowed this part of the plot, (as well as some of the phraseology,) though Theobald pronounces it is own invention: there likewise he found the quaint name of Petruchio. My young master and his man exchange habits and characters, and persuade a Scenæse, as he is called, to personate the *father*, exactly as in the Taming of the Shrew, by the pretended danger of his coming from Sienna to Ferrara, contrary to the order of the government.

Still, Shakspeare quotes a line from the Eunuch of Terence: by memory too, and what is more, "purposely alters it, in order to bring the sense within the compass of one line."—This remark was previous to Mr. Johnson's; or indisputably it would not have been made at all.—"Our author had this line from Lilly; which I mention that it may not be brought as an argument of his learning."

"But how," cries an unprovoked antagonist, "can you take upon you to say, that he had it from Lilly, and not from Terence*?" I will answer for Mr. Johnson, who is above answering for himself.—Because it is quoted as it appears in the *grammarian*, and not as it appears in the *poet*.—And thus we have done with the *purposed* alteration. Udall likewise in his "Floures for Latin speaking, gathered out of Terence," 1560, reduces the passage to a single line, and subjoins a translation.

We have hitherto supposed Shakspeare the author of The Taming of a Shrew, but his property in it is extremely disputable. I will give you my opinion, and the reasons on which it is founded. I suppose then the present play not *originally* the work of Shakspeare, but restored by him to the stage, with the whole Induction of the Tinker, and some other occasional improvements; especially in the character of Petruchio. It is very obvious, that the

Gathered partly (by translation) in the fyne outlandish gardins of Euripides, Ouid, Petrarke, Ariosto, and others: and partly by inuention, out of our own fruitefull orchardes in Englande: yelding sundrie sweet sauors of tragical, comical, and morall discourses, bothe pleasaunt and profitable to the well smellyng noses of learned readers." *Black letter*, 4to. no date.

* W. Kenrick's Review of Dr. Johnson's edit. of Shakspeare, 1765, 8vo. p. 105.

induction and the *play* were either the works of different hands, or written at a great interval of time: the former is in our author's *best* manner, and the greater part of the *latter* in his *worst*, or even below it. Dr. Warburton declares it to be *certainly* spurious: and without doubt, *supposing* it to have been written by Shakspeare, it *must* have been one of his *earliest* productions; yet it is not mentioned in the list of his works by Meres in 1598.

I have met with a facetious piece of Sir John Harrington, printed in 1596, (and possibly there may be an earlier edition,) called, *The Metamorphosis of Ajax*, where I suspect an allusion to the old play: "Reade the *booke* of *Taming a Shrew*, which hath made a number of us so perfect, that *now* every one can rule a shrew in our countrey, save he that hath hir."—I am aware, a *modern* linguist may object, that the word *book* does not at present seem *dramatick*, but it was once almost *technically* so: Gosson, in his *Schoole of Abuse*, "contayning a pleasaunt inuective against Poets, Pipers, Players, Jesters, and such like Caterpillars of a common-wealth," 1579, mentions "twoo prose *bookes* plaied at the Belsauage;" and Hearne tells us in a note at the end of William of Worcester, that he had seen "a MS. in the nature of a *play* or *interlude*, intituled, *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore*.*"

And in fact, there is such an old *anonymous* play in Mr. Pope's list. "A pleasant conceited History, called, *The Taming of a Shrew*—sundry times acted by the Earl of Pembroke his Servants." Which seems to have

* I know indeed, there is extant a very old poem, in *black letter*, to which it might have been supposed Sir John Harrington alluded, had he not spoken of the discovery as a *new* one, and recommended it as worthy the notice of his countrymen: I am persuaded the method in the old bard will not be thought *either*. At the end of the sixth volume of Leland's *Itinerary*, we are *favoured* by Mr. Hearne with a Macaronick poem on a battle at Oxford between the scholars and the townsmen: on a line of which,

Invadunt aulas *bycheson cum forth* geminantes,
our commentator very wisely and gravely remarks: "*Bycheson*, id est, *son* of a *byche*, ut è codice Rawlinsoniano edidi. Eo nempe modo quo et olim *whorson* dixerunt pro *son of a whore*. Exempla habemus cum alibi tum in libello quodam lepido et antiquo (inter codices Seldenianos in Bibl. Bodl.) qui inscribitur:

been republished by the remains of that company in 1607, when Shakspeare's copy appeared at the Black-Friars or the Globe.—Nor let this seem derogatory from the character of our poet. There is no reason to believe, that he wanted to claim the play as his own; it was not even printed till some years after his death: but he merely revived it on his stage as a *manager*.—Ravenscroft assures us, that this was really the case with Titus Andronicus; which, it may be observed, hath not Shakspeare's name on the title-page of the only edition published in his lifetime. Indeed, from every internal mark, I have not the least doubt but this *horrible* piece was originally written by the author of the *lines* thrown into the mouth of the *player* in Hamlet, and of the tragedy of Locrine: which likewise from some assistance perhaps given to his friend, hath been unjustly and ignorantly charged upon Shakspeare.

But the *sheet-anchor* holds fast: Shakspeare himself hath left some translations from Ovid. "The Epistles," says one, "of Paris and Helen, give a sufficient proof of his acquaintance with *that* poet:" "And it may be concluded," says another, "that he was a competent judge of *other* authors, who wrote in the same language."

This hath been the universal cry, from Mr. Pope himself to the criticks of yesterday. Possibly, however, the gentlemen will hesitate a moment, if we tell them, that

The wife lapped in Morel's Skin: or the Taming of a Shrew.
Ubi pag. 36, sic legimus:

- " They wrestled togyther thus they two
- " So long that the clothes asunder went.
- " And to the ground he threwe her tho,
- " That cleane from the backe her smock he rent.
- " In every hand a rod he gate,
- " And layd upon her a right good pace:
- " Asking of her what game was that,
- " And she cried out, *Horeson*, alas, alas."

Et pag. 42:

- " Come downe now in this seller so deepe,
- " And morels skin there shall you see:
- " With many a rod that hath made me to weepe,
- " When the blood ranne downe fast by my knee.
- " The mother this beheld, and cryed out, alas:
- " And ran out of the seller as she had been wood.
- " She came to the table where the company was,
- " And say'd out, *horeson*, I will see thy harte blood."

Shakspeare was *not* the author of these translations. Let them turn to a forgotten book, by Thomas Heywood, called, *Britaines Troy*, printed by W. Jaggard in 1609, fol. and they will find these identical Epistles, "which being so pertinent to our historie," says Heywood, "*I* thought necessarie to translate."—How then came they ascribed to Shakspeare? We will tell them that likewise. The same voluminous writer published an *Apology for Actors*, 4to. 1612, and in an Appendix directed to his new printer, Nic. Okes, he accuses his old one, Jaggard, of "taking the two Epistles of Paris to Helen and Helen to Paris, and printing them in a less volume, and under the name of *another*:—but *he* was much offended with Master Jaggard, that altogether unknowne to him, he had presumed to make so bold with his name*." In the same work of Heywood are all the other translations, which have been printed in the modern editions of the poems of Shakspeare.

You now hope for land: We have seen through little matters, but what must be done with a whole book?—In 1751, was reprinted, "A compendious or briefe Examination of certayne ordinary Complaints of diuers of our Countrymen in these our Days: which although they are in some Parte unjust and friuolous, yet are they all by way of Dialogue, throughly debated and discussed by William Shakspeare, Gentleman." 8vo.

This extraordinary piece was originally published in 4to. 1581, and dedicated by the author, "To the most vertuous and learned lady, his most deare and soveraigne princesse, Elizabeth; being inforced by her Majesties late and singular clemency in pardoning certayne his unduetifull misdemeavour." And by the modern editors, to the late King; as "a treatise composed by the most extensive and fertile genius, that ever any age or nation produced."

Here we join issue with the writers of that excellent

* It may seem little matter of wonder, that the name of Shakspeare should be borrowed for the benefit of the bookseller; and by the way, as probably for a *play* as a *poem*: but modern criticks may be surprised perhaps at the complaint of John Hall, that "certayne chapters of the Proverbes, translated by him into English metre, 1550, had before been untruely *entituled* to be the doyns of Mayster Thomas Sternhold.

though very unequal work, the *Biographia Britannica* *: "If," say they, "this piece could be written by our poet, it would be absolutely decisive in the dispute about his learning; for many quotations appear in it from the Greek and Latin classicks."

* I must, however, correct a remark in the *Life of Spenser*, which is impotently levelled at the first critics of the age. It is observed from the correspondence of Spenser and Gabriel Harvey, that the plan of *The Fairy Queen*, was laid, and part of it executed in 1580, *three* years before the *Gierusalemme Liberata* was printed: "hence appears the impertinence of all the apologies for his choice of Ariosto's manner in preference of Tasso's."

But the fact is not true with respect to Tasso. Manso and Nicéron inform us, that his poem was published, though imperfectly, in 1574; and I myself can assure the biographer, that I have met with at least *six* other editions, preceding his date for its first publication. I suspect, that Baillet is accountable for this mistake: who, in the *Jugemens des Scavans*, tom. iii. p. 399, mentions no edition previous to the quarto, Venice, 1583.

It is a question of long standing, whether a part of *The Fairy Queen* hath been *lost*, or whether the work was left *unfinished*: which may effectually be answered by a single quotation. William Browne published some Poems in fol. 1616, under the name of *Britannia's Pastorals*, "esteemed *then*," says Wood, "to be written in a sublime strain, and for subject *amorous* and *very pleasing*."—In one of which, book ii. song 1, he thus speaks of Spenser:

"He sung th' heroicke knights of faيري land
 "In lines so elegant, of such command,
 "That had the Thracian plaid but halfe so well,
 "He had not left Eurydice in hell.
 "But *e're* he ended his melodious song,
 "An host of *angels* flew the clouds among,
 "And rapt this swan from his attentive mates,
 "To make him one of their associates
 "In heauens faire quire: where now he sings the praise
 "Of him that is the *first and last of daies*."

It appears, that Browne was intimate with Drayton, Jonson, and Selden, by their poems prefixed to his book: he had therefore good opportunities of being acquainted with the fact above-mentioned. Many of his poems remain in MS. We have in our library at Emmanuel, a masque of his, presented at the Inner Temple, Jan. 13, 1614. The subject is the story of Ulysses and Circe.

The concurring circumstances of the *name*, and the *misdemeanor* which is supposed to be the old story of *deer-stealing*, seem fairly to challenge our poet for the author: but they hesitate.—His claim may appear to be confuted by the date 1581, when Shakspeare was only *seventeen*, and the *long* experience, which the writer talks of.—But I will not keep you in suspense: the book was *not* written by Shakspeare.

Strype, in his *Annals*, calls the author *some learned man*, and this gave me the first suspicion. I knew very well, that honest John (to use the language of Sir Thomas Bodley) did not waste his time with such *baggage books* as *plays* and *poems*; yet I must suppose, that he had heard of the name of Shakspeare. After a while I met with the original edition. Here in the title-page, and at the end of the dedication, appear only the initials, W. S. Gent. and presently I was informed by Anthony Wood, that the book in question was written, not by William Shakspeare, but by William Stafford, Gentleman*: which at once accounted for the *misdemeanour* in the dedication. For Stafford had been concerned at that time, and was indeed afterward, as Camden and the other annalists inform us, with some of the conspirators against Elizabeth; which he properly calls his *unduetifull* behaviour.

I hope by this time, that any one open to conviction may be nearly satisfied; and I will promise to give you on this head very little more trouble.

The justly celebrated Mr. Warton hath favoured us, in his *Life of Dr. Bathurst*, with some *hearsay* particulars concerning Shakspeare from the papers of Aubrey, which had been in the hands of Wood; and I ought not to suppress them, as the *last* seems to make against my doctrine. They came originally, I find, on consulting the MS. from one Mr. Beeston: and I am sure Mr. Warton, whom I have the honour to call my friend, and an associate in the question, will be in no pain about their credit.

“William Shakspeare’s father was a butcher,—while he was a boy he exercised his father’s trade, but when he killed

* *Fasti*, 2d edit. vol. i. 208.—It will be seen on turning to the former edition, that the latter part of the paragraph belongs to another Stafford.—I have since observed, that Wood is not the first who hath given us the true author of the pamphlet.

a calf, he would do it in a high style, and make a speech. This William being inclined *naturally* to poetry and acting, came to London, I guess, about *eighteen*, and was an actor in one of the playhouses, and did act *exceedingly well*. He began *early* to make essays in dramatic poetry.—The humour of the Constable in the Midsummer-Night's Dream he happened to take at Crendon* in Bucks.—I think, I have been told, that he left near three hundred pounds to a *sister*.—He understood Latin pretty well, *for* he had been in his younger yeares a schoolmaster in the country."

I will be short in my animadversions; and take them in their order.

The account of the *trade* of the family is not only contrary to all other tradition, but, as it may seem, to the instrument from the Herald's Office, so frequently reprinted.—Shakspeare most certainly went to London, and commenced actor through necessity, not natural inclination.—Nor have we any reason to suppose, that he did act *exceeding well*. Rowe tells us, from the information of Betterton, who was inquisitive into this point, and had very early opportunities of inquiry from Sir W. D'Avenant, that he was no *extraordinary actor*; and that the top of his performance was the Ghost in his own Hamlet. Yet this *chef d'œuvre* did not please: I will give you an original stroke at it. Dr. Lodge, who was for ever pestering the town with pamphlets, published in the year 1596, "Wits Miserie, and the Worlds Madnesse, discovering the Devils incarnat of this Age," 4to. One of these devils are "Hate-virtue, or Sorrow for another man's good succeſſe," who, says the Doctor, is "*a foule lubber*, and looks as pale as the visard of the Ghost, which cried so miserably at the theatre, like an oister-wife, *Hamlet revenge†*." Thus you see Mr. Holt's supposed *proof*, in the

* It was observed in the former edition, that this place is not met with in Spelman's Villare, or in Adams's Index; nor, it might have been added, in the *first* and the *last* performance of this sort, Speed's Tables, and Whatley's Gazetteer: perhaps, however, it may be meant under the name of *Crandon*;—but the inquiry is of no importance.—It should, I think, be written *Credendon*; though better antiquaries than Aubrey have acquiesced in the vulgar corruption.

† To this observation of Dr. Farmer it may be added, that the play of Hamlet was better known by this scene, than by any

Appendix to the late edition, that Hamlet was written after 1597, or perhaps 1602, will by no means hold good; whatever might be the case of the particular passage on which it is founded.

Nor does it appear, that Shakspeare did begin early to make essays in dramattick poetry: The Arraignment of Paris, 1584, which hath so often been ascribed to him on the credit of Kirkman and Winstanley*, was written by George Peele; and Shakspeare is not met with, even as an assistant, till at least seven years afterward†.—Nash, in his Epistle to the Gentlemen Students of both Universi-

other. In Decker's Satiromastix, 1602, the following passage occurs:

“*Asinius.*

“Would I were hang'd if I can call you any names but captain, and Tucca.”

“*Tucca.*

“No, fye; my name's *Hamlet Revenge*: thou hast been at Paris-Garden, hast thou not?”

Again, in Westward Hoe, by Decker and Webster, 1607:

“Let these husbands play *mad Hamlet*, and cry, *revenge!*”

STEEVENS.

Dr. Farmer's observation may be further confirmed by the following passage in an anonymous play, called A Warning for faire Women, 1599. We also learn from it the usual dress of the stage ghosts of that time:

“—— A filthie whining ghost,

“Lapt in some foule sheet, or a *leather pilch*,

“Comes screaming like a pigge half stickt,

“And cries *vindicta—revenge, revenge.*”

The leathern pitch, I suppose, was a theatrical substitute for armour. MALONE.

* These people, who were the Curles of the last age, ascribe likewise to our author, those miserable performances, Mucidorus, and The Merry Devil of Edmonton.

† Mr. Pope asserts, “The troublesome Raigne of King John,” in two parts, 1611, to have been written by Shakspeare and Rowley:—which edition is a mere copy of another in black letter, 1591. But I find his assertion is somewhat to be doubted: for the old edition hath no name of *author* at all; and that of 1611, the initials only, W. Sh. in the title-page‡.

‡ See the Essay on the Order of Shakspeare's Plays, Article, King John. MALONE.

ties, prefixed to Greene's *Arcadia*, 4to. black letter, recommends his friend, Peele, "as the chiefe supporter of pleasance now living, the Atlas of Poetrie, and primus verborum artifex: whose first increase, The Arraignment of Paris, might plead to their opinions his pregnant dexteritie of wit, and manifold varietie of inuention*."

In the next place, unfortunately, there is neither such a character as a Constable in the *Midsummer-Night's Dream*: nor was the three hundred pounds legacy to a sister, but a daughter.

And to close the whole, it is not possible, according to Aubrey himself, that Shakspeare could have been some years a schoolmaster in the country; on which circumstance only the supposition of his learning is professedly founded. He was not surely very young, when he was employed to kill calves, and commenced player about eighteen!—The truth is, that he left his father, for a wife,

* Peele seems to have been taken into the patronage of the Earl of Northumberland about 1593, to whom he dedicates in that year, "The Honour of the Garter, a poem gratulatorie—the firstling consecrated to his noble name."—"He was esteemed," says Anthony Wood, "a most noted poet, 1579; but when or where he died, I cannot tell, for so it is, and always hath been, that most POETS die poor, and consequently obscurely, and a hard matter it is to trace them to their graves. Claruit 1599." *Ath. Oxon.* vol. i. p. 300.

We had lately in a periodical pamphlet, called, *The Theatrical Review*, a very curious letter under the name of George Peele, to one Master Henrie Marle; relative to a dispute between Shakspeare and Alleyn, which was compromised by Ben Jonson.—"I never longed for thy companie more than last night; we were all verie merrie at the Globe, when Net Alleyn did not scruple to affyrme pleasauntly to thy friende Will, that he had stolen hys speeche about the excellencie of acting in *Hamlet* hys tragedye, from conversaytions manifold, whych had passed between them, and opinions gyven by Alleyn touching that subject. Shakspeare did not take this talk in good sorte; but Jonson did put an end to the stryfe wyth wittielie saying, thys affaire needeth no contentione: you stole it from Ned no doubt: do not marvel: haue you not seene hym acte tymes out of number?"—This is pretended to be printed from the original MS. dated 1600; which agrees well enough with Wood's *Claruit*: but unluckily, Peele was dead at least two years before. "As Anacreon died by the *pot*, says Meres, so George Peele by the *por*." *Wit's Treasury*, 1598, p. 286.

a year sooner; and had at least two children born at Stratford before he retired from thence to London. It is therefore sufficiently clear, that poor Anthony had too much reason for his character of Aubrey. You will find it in his own account of his life, published by Hearne, which I would earnestly recommend to any hypochondriack :

“ A pretender to antiquities, roving, magotie-headed, and sometimes little better than crased : and being exceedingly credulous, would stuff his many letters sent to A. W. with *follieries* and misinformations.” P. 577.

Thus much for the learning of Shakspeare with respect to the ancient languages : indulge me with an observation or two on the supposed knowledge of the modern ones, and I will promise to release you.

“ It is evident,” we have been told, “ that he was not unacquainted with the Italian :” but let us inquire into the evidence.

Certainly some Italian words and phrases appear in the works of Shakspeare; yet if we had nothing else to observe, their orthography might lead us to suspect them to be not of the writer’s importation. But we can go further, and prove this.

When Pistol “ cheers up himself with ends of verse,” he is only a copy of Hanniball Gonsaga, who ranted on yielding himself a prisoner to an English captain in the Low Countries, as you may read in an old collection of tales, called Wits, Fits, and Fancies*,

Si fortuna me tormenta,
Il speranza me contenta.

And Sir Richard Hawkins, in his voyage to the South-Sea, 1593, throws out the same jingling distich on the loss of his pinnacle.

“ Master Page, sit; good Master Page, sit; *Proface*. What you want in meat, we’ll have in drink,” says Justice Shallow’s *fac totum*, Davy, in the Second Part of Henry IV.

Proface, Sir Thomas Hamner observes to be Italian,

* By one Anthony Copley, 4to. black letter, it seems to have had many editions: perhaps the last was in 1614.—The first piece of this sort, that I have met with, was printed by T. Berthelet, though not mentioned by Ames, called, “ Tales, and quicke answeres very merry and pleasant to rede.” 4to. no date.

from *profaccia*, 'much good may it do you.' Mr. Johnson rather thinks it a mistake for *perforce*. Sir Thomas however is right; yet it is no argument for his author's Italian knowledge.

Old Heywood, the epigrammatist, addressed his readers long before,

"Readers, reade this thus: for preface, *proface*,

"Much good do it you, the poore repast here," &c.

Woorkes, Lond. 4to. 1562.

And Dekker in his play, If it be not good, the Diuel is in it, (which is certainly true, for it is full of devils,) makes Shackle-soule, in the character of Friar Rush, tempt his brethren with "choice of dishes,"

"To which *proface*; with blythe lookes sit yee."

Nor hath it escaped the quibbling manner of the Water-poet, in the title of a poem prefixed to his Praise of Hempseed: "A Preamble, Preatrot, Preagallop, Preapace, or Preface; and *Proface*, my Masters, if your Stomacks serve."

But the editors are not contented without coining Italian. "*Rivo*, says the drunkard," is an expression of the *madcap* Prince of Wales; which Sir Thomas Hanmer corrects to *Ribi*, *drink away* or *again*, as it should be rather translated. Dr. Warburton accedes to this; and Mr. Johnson hath admitted it into his text; but with an observation, that *Rivo* might possibly be the cant of English taverns. And so indeed it was: it occurs frequently in Marston. Take a quotation from this comedy of What you will, 1607:

"Musicke, tobacco, sacke, and sleepe,

"The tide of sorrow backward keep:

"If thou art sad at others fate,

"*Rivo*, drink deep, give care the mate."

In Love's Labour's Lost, Boyet calls Don Armado,

"——A Spaniard that keeps here in court,

"A phantasme, a *monarcho*.——"

Here too Sir Thomas is willing to palm Italian upon us. We should read, it seems, *mammuccio*, a mammet, or puppet: Ital. *Mammuccia*. But the allusion is to a fantastical character of the time.—"Popular applause," says

Meres, "dooth nourish some, neither do they gape after any other thing, but vaine praise and glorie,—as in our age Peter Shakerlye of Paules, and *Monarcho* that liued about the court." P. 178.

I fancy, you will be satisfied with one more instance.

"*Baccare*, You are marvellous forward," quoth Gremio to Petruchio in the Taming of a Shrew.

"But not so *forward*," says Mr. Theobald, "as our editors are *indolent*. This is a stupid corruption of the press, that none of them have dived into. We must read *Baccalare*, as Mr. Warburton acutely observed to me, by which the Italians mean, Thou ignorant, presumptuous man."—"Properly, indeed," adds Mr. Heath, "a *graduated* scholar, but ironically and sarcastically, a *pretender* to scholarship."

This is admitted by the editors and criticks of every denomination. Yet the word is neither wrong, nor Italian: it was an old proverbial one, used frequently by John Heywood; who hath made, what he pleases to call, *epigrams* upon it.

Take two of them, such as they are :

"*Backare*, quoth Mortimer to his sow :

"Went that sow *backe* at that bidding trowe you?"

"*Backare*, quoth Mortimer to his sow : se

"Mortimers sow speakth as good *latin* as he."

Howel takes this from Heywood in his Old Sawes and Adages: and Philpot introduces it into the Proverbs collected by Camden.

We have but few observations concerning Shakspeare's knowledge of the Spanish tongue. Dr. Grey indeed is willing to suppose, that the plot of Romeo and Juliet may be borrowed from a *comedy* of Lopes de Vega. But the Spaniard, who was certainly acquainted with Bandello, hath not only changed the catastrophe, but the names of the characters. Neither Romeo nor Juliet; neither Montague nor Capulet, appears in this performance: and how came they to the knowledge of Shakspeare?—Nothing is more certain, than that he chiefly followed the translation by Painter, from the French of Boisteau, and hence arise the deviations from Bandello's original Italian*. It seems,

* It is remarked, that "Paris, though in one place called *earl*, is most commonly styled the *countie* in this play. Shakspeare

however, from a passage in Ames's *Typographical Antiquities*, that Painter was not the only translator of this popular story : and it is possible therefore, that Shakspeare might have other assistance.

In the Induction to *The Taming of the Shrew*, the Tinker attempts to talk Spanish : and *consequently* the author himself was acquainted with it.

“ *Paucas pallabris*, let the world slide, *sessa*.”

But this is a burlesque on *Hieronimo*; the piece of bombast, that I have mentioned to you before :

“ What new device hath they devised, trow ?

“ *Pocas pallabras*,” &c.——

Mr. Whalley tells us, the author of this piece hath the happiness to be at this time unknown, the remembrance of him having perished with himself : Philips and others ascribe it to one William Smith : but I take this opportunity of informing him, that it was written by Thomas Kyd ; if he will accept the authority of his contemporary, Heywood.

More hath been said concerning Shakspeare's acquaint-

seems to have preferred, for some reason or other, the Italian *conte* to our *count* :—perhaps he took it from the old English novel, from which he is said to have taken his plot.”—He certainly did so : Paris is there first styled *a young earle*, and afterward, *counte*, *countee*, and *countie* ; according to the unsettled orthography of the time.

The word, however, is frequently met with in other writers ; particularly in Fairfax :

“ As when a captaine doth besiege some hold,

“ Set in a marish or high on a hill,

“ And trieth waies and wiles a thousand fold,

“ To bring the piece subjected to his will :

“ So far'd the *countie* with the pagan bold.” &c.

Godfrey of Bulloigne, book vii. st. 90.

“ Fairfax,” says Mr. Hume, “ hath translated Tasso with an elegance and ease, and at the same time with an exactness, which for that age are surprising. Each line in the original is faithfully rendered by a correspondent line in the translation.” The former part of this character is extremely true ; but the latter not quite so. In the book above quoted Tasso and Fairfax do not even agree in the number of *stanzas*.

ance with the French language. In the play of Henry V. we have a whole scene in it, and in other places it occurs familiarly in the dialogue.

We may observe in general, that the early editions have not half the quantity; and every sentence, or rather every word most ridiculously blundered. These, for several reasons, could not possibly be published by the author *;

* Every writer on Shakspeare hath expressed his astonishment, that his author was not solicitous to secure his fame by a correct edition of his performances. This matter is not understood. When a poet was connected with a particular play-house, he constantly sold his works to the *Company*, and it was their interest to keep them from a number of rivals. A favourite piece, as Heywood informs us, only got into print, when it was copied *by the ear*, "for a double sale would bring on a suspicion of honestie." Shakspeare therefore himself published nothing in the drama: when he left the stage, his copies remained with his fellow-managers, Heminge and Condell; who at their own retirement, about seven years after the death of their author, gave the world the edition now known by the name of the *first folio*; and call the previous publications "stolne and surreptitious, maimed and deformed by the frauds and stealths of injurious impostors." But *this* was printed from the play-house copies; which in a series of years had been frequently altered, through convenience, caprice, or ignorance. We have a sufficient instance of the liberties taken by the actors, in an old pamphlet by Nash, called *Lenten Stuff*, with the *Prayse of the red Herring*, 4to. 1599, where he assures us, that in a play of his, called *The Isle of Dogs*, "*foure acts*, without his consent, or the leaste guesse of his drift or scope, were supplied by the players."

This, however, was not his first quarrel with them. In the Epistle prefixed to Greene's *Arcadia*, which I have quoted before, Tom hath a lash at some "vaine glorious tragedians," and very plainly at Shakspeare in particular; which will serve for an answer to an observation of Mr. Pope, that had almost been forgotten: "It was thought a praise to Shakspeare, that he scarce ever blotted a line:—I believe the common opinion of his want of learning proceeded from no better ground. This too might be thought a praise by some."—But hear Nash, who was far from *praising*: "I leaue all these to the mercy of their *mother-tongue*, that feed on nought but the crums that fall from the *translator's* trencher.—That could scarcely *Latinize* their neck verse if they should haue neede, yet *English Seneca* read by candle-light yeelds many good sentences---hee will afford you whole *Hamlets*, I should say, *handfuls* of tragicall speeches."

and it is extremely probable, that the French ribaldry was at first inserted by a different hand, as the many additions most certainly were after he had left the stage.—Indeed, every friend to his memory will not easily believe, that he was acquainted with the scene between Catharine and the old gentlewoman; or surely he would not have admitted such obscenity and nonsense.

Mr. Hawkins, in the Appendix to Mr. Johnson's edition, hath an ingenious observation to prove, that Shakspeare, supposing the French to be his, had very little knowledge of the language.

"Est-il impossible d'échapper la force de ton *bras*?" says a Frenchman.—"*Brass*, cur?" replies Pistol.

"Almost any one knows, that the French word *bras* is pronounced *brau*; and what resemblance of sound does this bear to *brass*?"

Mr. Johnson makes a doubt, whether the pronunciation of the French language may not be changed, since Shakspeare's time, "if not," says he, "it may be suspected that some other man wrote the French scenes:" but this does not appear to be the case, at least in this termination, from the rules of the grammarians, or the practice of

—I cannot determine exactly when this *Epistle* was first published; but, I fancy, it will carry the original *Hamlet* somewhat further back than we have hitherto done: and it may be observed, that the oldest copy now extant is said to be "enlarged to almost as much againe as it was." Gabriel Harvey printed at the end of the year 1592, *Four Letters* and certaine Sonnetts, especially touching Robert Greene: in one of which his *Arcadia* is mentioned. Now Nash's *Epistle* must have been previous to these, as Gabriel is quoted in it with applause; and the *Four Letters* were the beginning of a quarrel. Nash replied, in *Strange Newes* of the intercepting certaine Letters, and a Convey of Verses, as they were going *privilie* to victual the Low Countries, 1593. Harvey rejoined the same year in *Pierce's Supererogation*, or a new Praise of the old Asse. And Nash again, in *Have with you to Saffron Walden*, or Gabriell Harvey's Hunt is up; containing a full Answer to the eldest Sonne of the Halter-maker, 1596.

Dr. Lodge calls Nash our *true English Aretine*: and John Taylor in his *Kicksey-Winsey*, or a Lerry Come-twang, even makes an oath "by sweet satyricke Nashe his urne."—He died before 1606, as appears from an old comedy, called *The Return from Parnassus*.

the poets. I am certain of the former from the French Alphabeth of De la Mothe*, and the Orthoepia Gallica of John Eliot†; and of the latter from the rhymes of Marot, Ronsard, and Du Bartas.—Connections of this kind were very common. Shakspeare himself assisted Ben Jonson in his *Sejanus*, as it was originally written; and Fletcher in his *Two Noble Kinsmen*.

But what if the French scene were occasionally introduced into every play on this subject? and perhaps there were more than one before our poet's—In *Pierce Penilesse*, his *Supplication to the Deuill*, 4to. 1592, (which, it seems, from the *Epistle to the Printer*, was not in the first edition,) the author, Nash, exclaims, “What a glorious thing it is to have Henry the Fifth represented on the stage leading the French King prisoner, and forcing both him and the Dolphin to swear fealty!”—And it appears from the *Jests of the famous comedian, Tarlton*, 4to. 1611, that he had been particularly celebrated in the part of the Clown, in Henry the Fifth; but no such character exists in the play of Shakspeare. Henry the Sixth hath ever been doubted; and a passage in the above-quoted piece of Nash may give us reason to believe, it was previous to our author. “Howe would it haue joyed braue Talbot (the terror of the French) to thinke that after he had lyen two hundred yeare in his toomb, he should triumph again on the stage; and haue his bones now embalmed with the teares of ten thousand spectators at least (at seuerall times) who in the tragedian that represents his person, imagine they behold him fresh bleeding.”—I have no doubt but Henry the Sixth had the same author with Edward the Third, which hath been recovered to the world in Mr. Capell's *Prolusions*.

It hath been observed, that the Giant of Rabelais is sometimes alluded to by Shakspeare: and in *his* time no

* Lond. 1592, 8vo.

† Lond. 1593, 4to. Eliot is almost the only *witty* grammarian that I have had the fortune to meet with. In his *Epistle prefatory to The Gentle Doctors of Gaule*, he cries out for persecution, very like Jack in that most poignant of all Satires, the *Tale of a Tub*, “I pray you be readie quicklie to cauill at my booke, I beseech you heartily calumnieate my doings with speede, I request you humbly controll my method as soone as you may, I earnestly entreat you hisse at my inventions,” &c.

translation was extant.—But the story was in every one's hand.

In a letter by one Laneham, or Langham, for the name is written differently *, concerning the entertainment at Killingwoorth Castle, printed 1575, we have a list of the vulgar romances of the age: King Arthurz Book, Huon of Burdeaus, Friar Rous, Howleglass, and *Gargantua*." Meres † mentions him as equally hurtful to young minds with the Four Sons of Aymon, and the Seven Champions. And John Taylor had him likewise in his catalogue of *authors*, prefixed to Sir Gregory Nonsense ‡.

But to come to a conclusion, I will give you an irrefragable argument, that Shakspeare did *not* under-

* It is indeed of no importance, but I suspect the former to be right, as I find it corrupted afterward to *Lanam* and *Lanum*.

† This author by a pleasant mistake in some sensible *Conjectures on Shakspeare* lately printed at Oxford, is quoted by the name of *Maister*. Perhaps the title-page was imperfect; it runs thus: "Palladis Tamia. Wits Treasury. Being the second part of Wits Commonwealth, By Francis Meres Maister of Artes of both Universities."

I am glad out of gratitude to this man, who hath been of frequent service to me, that I am enabled to perfect Wood's account of him; from the assistance of our *Master's* very accurate list of graduates, (which it would do honour to the university to print at the publick expense) and the kind information of a friend from the register of his parish:—He was originally of Pembroke-Hall, B. A. in 1587, and M. A. 1591. About 1602 he became rector of Wing in Rutland; and died there, 1646, in the 81st year of his age.

‡ I have quoted many pieces of John Taylor, but it was impossible to give their original dates. He may be traced as an author for more than half a century. His works were collected in folio, 1630, but many were printed afterward; I will mention one for the humour of the title: "Drinke and welcome, or the famous History of the most part of Drinkes in use in Greate Britaine and Ireland; with an especial Declaration of the Potency, Vertue, and Operation of our English Ale: with a description of all sorts of *Waters*, from the *Ocean Sea* to the *Tears of a Woman*, 4to. 1633." In *Wits Merriment, or Lusty Drollery*, 1656, we have an "Epitaph on John Taylor, who was born in the city of Gloucester, and dyed in Phoenix Alley, in the 75 yeare of his age; you may find him, if the worms have not devoured him, in Covent Garden churchyard," p. 130, —He died about two years before.

stand *two* very common words in the French and Latin languages.

According to the articles of agreement between the conqueror Henry and the King of France, the latter was to style the former, (in the corrected French of the former editions,) “*Nostre tres cher filz Henry roy d’Angleterre*; and in Latin, *Præclarissimus filius*,” &c. “What,” says Dr. Warburton, “is *tres cher* in French, *præclarissimus* in Latin! we should read *præcarissimus*.”—This appears to be exceedingly true; but how came the blunder? it is a typographical one in Holinshed, which Shakspeare copied; but must indisputably have corrected, had he been acquainted with the languages.—“Our said father, during his life, shall name, call, and write us in French in this manner: *Nostre tres chier filz, Henry roy d’Angleterre*—and in Latine in this manner, *Præclarissimus filius noster*.” Edit. 1587, p. 574.

To corroborate this instance, let me observe to you, though it be nothing further to the purpose, that another error of the same kind hath been the source of a mistake in an historical passage of our author, which hath ridiculously troubled the critics.

Richard the Third* harangues his army before the battle of Bosworth:

* Some inquiry hath been made for the first performers of the capital characters in Shakspeare.

We learn, that Burbage, the *alter Roscius* of Camden, was the original *Richard*, from a passage in the poems of Bishop Corbet; who introduces his host at Bosworth describing the battle:

“But when he would have said King Richard died,

“And call’d a horse, a horse, he Burbage cried.”

The play on this subject mentioned by Sir John Harrington in his *Apologie for Poetrie*, 1591, and sometimes mistaken for Shakspeare’s, was a Latin one, and written by Dr. Legge; and acted at St. John’s in our university, some years before 1588, the date of the copy in the Museum. This appears from a better MS. in our library at Emmanuel, with the names of the original performers.

It is evident from a passage in Camden’s *Annals*, that there was an old play likewise on the subject of Richard the Second; but I know not in what language. Sir Gelley Merrick, who was concerned in the harebrained business of the Earl of Essex, and was hanged for it with the ingenious Cuffe, in 1601, is accused

“Remember whom ye are to cope withal,
 “A sort of vagabonds, of rascals, runaways—
 “And who doth lead them but a paltry fellow
 “Long kept in Britaine at *our mother's* cost;
 “A milksop,” &c.—

“*Our mother*,” Mr. Theobald perceives to be wrong, and Henry was somewhere secreted on the *continent*: he reads therefore, and all the editors after him,

“Long kept in Bretagne at *his* mother's cost.”

But give me leave to transcribe a few more lines from Holinshed, and you will find at once, that Shakspeare had been there before me:—“Ye see further, how a companie of traitors, theeves, outlaws and runnagates be aiders and partakers of his feat and enterprise.—And to begin with the erle of Richmond captaine of this rebellion, he is a Welsh milksop—brought up by *my moother's* means and mine, like a captive in a close cage in the court of Francis Duke of Britaine.” P. 756.

Holinshed copies this *verbatim* from his brother chronicler Hall, edit. 1548, fol. 54; but his printer hath given us by accident the word *moother* instead of *brother*; as it is in the original, and ought to be in Shakspeare*.

I hope, my good friend, you have by this time acquitted our great poet of all piratical depredations on the ancients, and are ready to receive my *conclusion*.—He remembered perhaps enough of his *school-boy* learning to put the *Hig*,

amongst other things, “quod *exoletam* Tragœdiam de tragicâ abdicatione Regis Ricardi Secundi in publico theatro coram conjuratis datâ pecuniâ agi curasset.”

* I cannot take my leave of Holinshed without clearing up a difficulty, which hath puzzled his biographers. Nicholson and other writers have *supposed* him a *clergyman*. Tanner goes further, and tells us, that he was educated at Cambridge, and actually took the degree of M. A. in 1544. Yet it appears by his will, printed by Hearne, that at the end of life he was only a *steward* or a *servant* in some capacity or other, to Thomas Burdett, Esq. of Bromcote, in Warwickshire.—These things Dr. Campbell could not reconcile. The truth is, we have no claim to the education of the *Chronicler*: the M. A. in 1544, was not *Raphael*, but one *Oltiwell Holingshed*, who was afterward named by the founder one of the first Fellows of Trinity College.

hag, hog, into the mouth of Sir Hugh Evans; and might pick up in the writers of the time*, or the course of his conversation, a familiar phrase or two of French or Italian: but his *studies* were most demonstratively confined to *nature* and *his own language*.

In the course of this disquisition, you have often smiled at “all such reading, as was never read;” and possibly I may have indulged it too far: but it is the reading necessary for a comment on Shakspeare. Those who apply solely to the ancients for this purpose, may with equal wisdom study the *Talmud* for an exposition of *Tristram Shandy*. Nothing but an intimate acquaintance with the writers of the time, who are frequently of no other value, can point out his allusions, and ascertain his phraseology. The reformers of his text are for ever equally positive, and equally wrong. The cant of the age, a provincial expression, an obscure proverb, an obsolete custom, a hint at a person or a fact no longer remembered, hath continually defeated the best of our *guessers*: You must not suppose me to speak at random, when I assure you, that from some forgotten book or other, I can demonstrate this to you in many hundred places: and I almost wish, that I had not been persuaded into a different employment.

Though I have as much of the *natale solum*† about me,

* Ascham in the Epistle prefixed to his *Toxophilus*, 1571, observes of them, that “Manye Englishe writers, usinge straunge wordes, as *Lattine*, *Frenche*, and *Italian*, do make all thinges darke and harde. Ones,” says he, “I communed with a man which reasoned the Englishe tongue to be enriched and encreased thereby, sayinge: Who will not prayse that feast, where a man shall drincke at a dinner both wyne, ale, and beere? Truly (quoth I) they be al good, eury one taken by himself alone, but if you put Malmesye and sacke, redde wyne and white, ale and beere, and al in one pot, you shall make a drinke neither easye to be knowen, nor yet holsome for the bodye.”

† This alludes to an intended publication of the *Antiquities of the Town of Leicester*. The work was just begun at the press, when the writer was called to the principal tuition of a large college, and was obliged to decline the undertaking. The plates, however, and some of the materials, have been long ago put into the hands of a gentleman, who is every way qualified to make a proper use of them.

as any man whatsoever ; yet, I own, the *primrose path* is still more pleasing than the *Fosse* or the *Watling-street* :

“ Age cannot wither it, nor custom stale

“ Its infinite variety.—”

And when I am fairly rid of the dust of topographical antiquity, which hath continued much longer about me than I expected ; you may very probably be troubled again with the ever fruitful subject of *Shakspeare* and his *Commentators*.

By a mistake, for which I must offer an apology to the reader, in giving out the copy to the printer, the following note by Mr. Steevens, and Dr. Farmer's two prefaces, were omitted in their former places, before his essay. They are here subjoined. BOSWELL.



Though our commentaries on the following Plays have been enriched by numerous extracts from this celebrated Essay, the whole of it is here reprinted. I shall hazard no contradiction relative to the value of its contents, when I add—

—*prosunt singula, juncta juvant.* STEEVENS.

P R E F A C E

TO

THE SECOND EDITION, 1767.

THE author of the following *Essay* was solicitous only for the honour of Shakspeare: he hath however, in *his own* capacity, little reason to complain of *occasional* criticks, or criticks *by profession*. The very *few*, who have been pleased to controvert any part of his doctrine, have favoured him with better manners, than arguments; and claim his thanks for a further opportunity of demonstrating the futility of *theoretick* reasoning against *matter of fact*. It is indeed strange, that any *real* friends of our immortal Poet should be still willing to force him into a situation, which is not tenable: treat him as a *learned* man, and what shall excuse the most gross violations of history, chronology, and geography?

Ὁὐ πείσεις, εἰδὲ ἢν πείσῃς, is the motto of every *polemick*: like his brethren at the *amphitheatre*, he holds it a merit to *die hard*; and will not say, *enough*, though the battle be decided. “Were it shown, (says some one) that the old bard borrowed *all* his allusions from English books then published, our Essayist might have possibly established his system.”—In good time!—This had scarcely been attempted by Peter Burman himself, with the library of Shakspeare before him——“Truly, (as Mr. Dogberry says,) for *mine own* part, if I were as tedious as a king, I could find in my heart to bestow it all on this subject:” but where should I meet with a reader?—When the main pillars are taken away, the whole building falls in course: Nothing hath been, or can be, pointed out, which is not easily removed; or rather which was not *virtually* removed

before: a very little *analogy* will do the business. I shall therefore have no occasion to trouble myself any further; and may venture to call my pamphlet, in the words of a pleasant declaimer against *sermons on the thirtieth of January*, “an answer to every thing that shall hereafter be written on the subject.”

But “this method of reasoning will prove any one ignorant of the languages, who hath written when translations were extant.”—Shade of Burgersdicius!—does it follow, because Shakspeare’s early life was incompatible with a course of education—whose contemporaries, friends and foes, nay, and himself likewise, agree in his want of what is usually called *literature*—whose mistakes from equivocal translations, and even typographical errors, cannot possibly be accounted for otherwise,—that Locke, to whom not one of these circumstances is applicable, understood no *Greek*?—I suspect, Rollin’s opinion of our philosopher was not founded on this argument.

Shakspeare wanted not the stilts of languages to raise him above all other men. The quotation from Lilly in *The Taming of the Shrew*, if indeed it be his, strongly proves the extent of his reading: had he known Terence, he would not have quoted erroneously from his Grammar. Every one hath met with men in common life, who, according to the language of the Water-poet, “got only from *possum* to *posset*,” and yet will throw out a line occasionally from their *Accidence* or their *Cato de Moribus* with tolerable propriety.—If, however, the old editions be trusted in this passage, our author’s memory somewhat failed him in point of *concord*.

The rage of *parallelisms* is almost over, and in truth nothing can be more absurd. “*This* was stolen from *one* classick,—*That* from *another*,”—and had I not stept into his rescue, poor Shakspeare had been stript as naked of ornament, as when he first *held horses* at the door of the playhouse.

The late ingenious and modest Mr. Dodsley declared himself

“Untutor’d in the lore of Greece or Rome.”

yet let us take a passage at a venture from any of his performances, and a thousand to one, it is stolen. Suppose it to be his celebrated compliment to the *ladies*, in one of his earliest pieces, *The Toy-shop*: “A good wife makes

the cares of the world sit easy, and adds a sweetness to its pleasures; she is a man's best companion in prosperity, and his only friend in adversity; the carefullest preserver of his health, and the kindest attendant in his sickness; a faithful adviser in distress, a comforter in affliction, and prudent manager in all his domestick affairs." *Plainly*, from a fragment of Euripides preserved by Stobæus :

Γυνὴ γὰρ ἐν κακοῖσι καὶ νόσοις πόσις
 Ἡδιστόν ἐστι, δωματ' ἦν οἴκῃ καλῶς,
 Ὅργῃν τε πρηνεσσα, καὶ δυσθυμίας
 Ψυχὴν μεδισᾶσ'! ——— *Par. 4to. 1623.*

Malvolio, in the Twelfth-Night of Shakspeare, hath some expressions very similar to Alnaschar in the Arabian Tales: which perhaps may be sufficient for *some* criticks to prove his acquaintance with *Arabic*!

It seems, however, at last, that "*Taste* should determine the matter." This, as Bardolph expresses it, is a *word of exceeding good command*: but I am willing, that the standard itself be somewhat better ascertained before it be opposed to demonstrative evidence.—Upon the whole, I may consider myself as the *pioneer* of the *commentators*: I have removed a deal of *learned rubbish*, and pointed out to them Shakspeare's track in the ever-pleasing *paths of nature*. This was necessarily a previous inquiry; and I hope I may assume with some confidence, what one of the first criticks of the age was pleased to declare on reading the former edition, that "*The question is now for ever decided.*"

* * I may just remark, lest they be mistaken for *Errata*, that the word *Catherine* in the 329th page is written, according to the old Orthography for *Catharine*; and that the passage in the 332d page is copied from Upton, who improperly calls Horatio and Marcellus in Hamlet, "*the Centinels.*"

ADVERTISEMENT

PREFIXED TO

THE THIRD EDITION, 1789.

IT may be necessary to apologize for the republication of this pamphlet. The fact is, it has been for a good while extremely scarce, and some mercenary publishers were induced by the extravagant price which it has occasionally borne, to project a new edition without the consent of the author.

A few corrections might probably be made, and many additional proofs of the argument have necessarily occurred in more than twenty years: some of which may be found in the late admirable editions of our Poet, by Mr. Steevens and Mr. Reed.

But, perhaps enough is already said on so light a subject:—A subject, however, which had for a long time pretty warmly divided the criticks upon Shakspeare.

APPENDIX

TO MR. COLMAN'S TRANSLATION OF TERENCE.

(OCTAVO EDITION.)

THE reverend and ingenious Mr. Farmer, in his curious and entertaining "Essay on the Learning of Shakspeare," having done me the honour to animadvert on some passages in the preface to this translation, I cannot dismiss this edition without declaring how far I coincide with that gentleman; although what I then threw out carelessly on the subject of this pamphlet was merely incidental, nor did I mean to enter the lists as a champion to defend either side of the question.

It is most true, as Mr. Farmer takes for granted, that I had never met with the old comedy called *The Supposes*, nor has it ever yet fallen into my hands; yet I am willing to grant, on Mr. Farmer's authority, that Shakspeare borrowed part of the plot of *The Taming of the Shrew*, from that old translation of Ariosto's play by George Gascoign, and had no obligations to Plautus. I will accede also to the truth of Dr. Johnson's and Mr. Farmer's observation, that the line from Terence, exactly as it stands in Shakspeare, is extant in Lilly, and Udall's "Floures for Latin Speaking." Still, however, Shakspeare's total ignorance of the learned languages remains to be proved; for it must be granted, that such books are put into the hands of those who are learning those languages, in which class we must necessarily rank Shakspeare, or he could not even have quoted Terence from Udall or Lilly; nor is it likely, that so rapid a genius should not have made some further progress. "Our author," says Dr. Johnson, as quoted by Mr. Farmer, "had this line from Lilly; which I mention, that it may not be brought as an argument of his learning." It is, however, an argument that he read Lilly; and a few pages

further it seems pretty certain, that the author of *The Taming of the Shrew* had at least read Ovid ; from whose Epistle we find these lines :

Hæcibat Simois ; hic est Sigeia tellus ;
Hic steterat Priami regia celsa senis.

And what does Dr. Johnson say on this occasion ? Nothing. And what does Mr. Farmer say on this occasion ? Nothing*.

In *Love's Labour's Lost*, which, bad as it is, is ascribed by Dr. Johnson himself to Shakspeare, there occurs the word *thrasonical* ; another argument which seems to show that he was not unacquainted with the comedies of Terence ; not to mention, that the character of the school-master in the same play could not possibly be written by a man who had travelled no further in Latin than *hic, hæc, hoc*.

In Henry the Sixth we meet with a quotation from Virgil :

Tantæne animis cœlestibus iræ ?

But this, it seems, proves nothing, any more than the lines from Terence and Ovid, in *The Taming of the Shrew* ; for Mr. Farmer looks on Shakspeare's property in the comedy to be extremely disputable ; and he has no doubt but Henry the Sixth had the same author with Edward the Third, which had been recovered to the world in Mr. Capell's *Prolusions*.

If any play in the collection bears internal evidence of Shakspeare's hand, we may fairly give him *Timon of Athens*. In this play we have a familiar quotation from Horace :

" Ira furor brevis est."

I will not maintain but this hemistich may be found in Lilly or Udall ; or that it is not in the "*Palace of Pleasure*," or the "*English Plutarch* ;" or that it was not originally foisted in by the players ; it stands, however, in the play of *Timon of Athens*.

* " Colman, in a note on his Translation of Terence, talking of Shakspeare's *Learning*, asks, ' What says Farmer to this ? What says Johnson ? ' Upon this he observed, ' Sir, let Farmer answer for himself : I never engaged in this controversy. I always said Shakspeare had Latin enough to grammaticise his English.' Boswell's *Life of Dr. Johnson*, vol. iii. 264.

The world in general, and those who purpose to comment on Shakspeare in particular, will owe much to Mr. Farmer, whose researches into our old authors throw a lustre on many passages, the obscurity of which must else have been impenetrable. No future Upton or Gildon will go further than North's translation for Shakspeare's acquaintance with Plutarch, or balance between Dares Phrygius, and "The Troye Booke of Lydgate." "The Hystorie of Hamblet," in *black letter*, will for ever supersede *Saxo Grammaticus*; translated novels and ballads will, perhaps, be allowed the sources of Romeo, Lear, and The Merchant of Venice; and Shakspeare himself, however unlike Bayes in other particulars, will stand convicted of having *transversed* the prose of Holinshed; and, at the same time, to prove "that his *studies* lay in his own language," the translations of Ovid are determined to be the production of Heywood.

"That his *studies* were most demonstratively confined to *nature*, and his *own language*," I readily allow: but does it hence follow that he was so deplorably ignorant of every other tongue, living or dead, that he only "remembered, perhaps, enough of his *school-boy* learning to put the *hig*, *hag*, *hog*, into the mouth of Sir H. Evans; and might pick up in the writers of the time, or the course of his conversation, a familiar phrase or two of French or Italian." In Shakspeare's plays both these last languages are plentifully scattered; but, then we are told, they might be impertinent additions of the players. Undoubtedly they might: but there they are, and, perhaps, few of the players had much more learning than Shakspeare.

Mr. Farmer himself will allow that Shakspeare began to learn Latin: I will allow that his *studies* lay in English: but why insist that he neither made any progress at school; nor improved his acquisitions there? The general encomiums of Suckling, Denham, Milton, &c. on his *native genius**, prove nothing; and Ben Jonson's

* Mr. Farmer closes the general testimonies of Shakspeare's having been only indebted to nature, by saying, "He came out of her hand, *as some one else expresses it*, like Pallas out of Jove's head, at full growth and mature." It is whimsical enough, that this *some one else*, whose expression is here quoted to countenance the general notion of Shakspeare's want of

celebrated charge of Shakspeare's *small Latin and less Greek*†, seems absolutely to decide that he had *some* knowledge of both; and if we may judge by our own time, a man, who has any Greek, is seldom without a very competent share of Latin; and yet such a man is very likely to study Plutarch in English, and to read translations of Ovid.

See Dr. Farmer's reply to these remarks by Mr. Colman, in a note on *Love's Labour's Lost*, Act IV. Sc. II.

literature, should be no other than myself. Mr. Farmer does not choose to mention where he met with the expression of *some one else*; and *some one else* does not choose to mention where he dropt it ‡.

† In defence of the various reading of this passage, given in the Preface to the last edition of Shakspeare, "*small Latin and no Greek*," Mr. Farmer tells us, that "it was adopted above a century ago by W. Towers, in a panegyrick on Cartwright." Surely Towers having said that Cartwright had *no Greek*, is no proof that Ben Jonson said so of Shakspeare.

‡ It will appear still more whimsical that this *some one else* whose expression is here quoted, may have his claim to it superseded by that of the late Dr. Young, who in his "*Conjectures on Original Composition*," (p. 100, vol. v. edit. 1773,) has the following sentence: "An adult genius comes out of nature's hands, as Pallas out of Jove's head, at full growth and mature. Shakspeare's genius was of this kind." Where *some one else* the *first* may have intermediately dropped the contested expression I cannot ascertain; but *some one else* the *second* transcribed it from the author already mentioned. ANON.

ANCIENT TRANSLATIONS

FROM CLASSIC AUTHORS*.

HOMER.

- T**EN Bookes of Homer's Iliades translated out of French, by Arthur Hall, Esquire. At London. Imprinted by Ralph Newberie, 4to†..... 1581
The Shield of Achilles from the 18th Book of Homer, by George Chapman, 4to. London 1596
Seven Books of the Iliades, by ditto, 4to §. Lond. 1596
D°. 1598
† Homer Prince of Poets: translated according to the Greeke in Twelve Bookes of his Iliads: By Geo. Chapman; small folio. Lond. printed for Samuel Macham. *No date.*

[This, I believe, was published in 1609. There are

* This List was drawn up by Mr. Steevens. I have made a few inconsiderable additions to it, which are distinguished by this mark † being prefixed. MALONE.

† In the first vol. of the books of entries belonging to the Stationers' Company, is the following:

"Henry Bynneman.] Nov. 1580, lycenced unto him under the wardens' handes ten bookes of the Iliades of Homer." Again, "Samuel Macham.] Nov. 14, 1608. Seven bookes of Homer's Iliades translated into English by George Chapman.—[By assignment from Mr. Windett.]" Again, "Nathaniel Butter.] April 8, 1611, A booke called Homer's Iliades in Englishe, containing 24 Bookes." Again, "Nov. 2, 1614, Homer's Odisses 24 bookes, translated by George Chapman."

§ Meres, in his Second Part of Wits Commonwealth, says that Chapman is "of good note for his inchoate Homer."

Thomas Drant, (the translator of two books of Horace's Satires, 1566,) in a miscellany of Latin poetry, entitled Sylva, informs us, that he had begun to translate the Iliad, but had gone no further than the fourth book.

several Sonnets at the end, addressed to different noblemen; among them one, "to the Lord Treasurer, the Earl of Salisbury." See also the entry below.]

Fifteen Books of D^o. thin folio 1600

[The Iliads of Homer, Prince of Poets. Neuer before in any language truly translated, with a Comēnt uppon some of his chiefe places; Donne according to the Greeke. By George Chapman. At London, printed for Nathaniel Butter. William Hole sculp. [This edition contains the 24 Books.]

[At the back of the engraved title-page (for the Head of Chapman was not placed there, till the edition of 1614,) in Mr. Steevens's copy is the following inscription in the hand-writing of the Translator: "In wittness of his best Loue, borne to his best-deseruing freinde, Mr. Henrye Jones; Geo: Chapman giues him theise fruites of his best Labors, and desires Loue betwixt us, as longe-liu'd as Homer."]

[From the Stationers' Register it appears that this book, small folio, was printed in 1611. See note 7. The Prince of Wales, to whom the work is dedicated, died Nov. 6, 1612. In the republication (1614) it is inscribed, on an additional engraved frontispiece, to his Memory.]

The whole Workes of Homer, Prince of Poetts. In his Iliads and Odysses. Translated according to the Greeke, by Geo. Chapman. De Ili: et Odiss:

Omnia ab his; et in his sunt omnia: sive beati
Te decor eloquii, seu rerū pondera tangunt.

Angel. Pol.

At London, printed for Nathaniell Butter. William Hole, sculp.

[This book was probably printed in 1614.]

The large head of Geo. Chapman is placed at the back of the engraved title-page.

The Crowne of all Homer's Works, Batrachomymachia, &c. *[By Geo Chapman, with his portrait by W. Pass, in the title-page.] thin folio; printed by John Bill. No date*.

* In the first volume of the Entries of the Stationers' Company is the following:

"T. Purfoote.] The Battel of the Frogges and Myce, and certain orations of Isocrates." Jan. 4, 1579.

The strange wonderfull and bloudy Battel between Frogs and Mise; paraphrastically done into English Heroicall Verse, by W. F. (i. e. William Fowldes,) 4to. 1603

HESIOD.

The Georgicks of Hesiod, by George Chapman; Translated elaborately out of the Greek: Containing Doctrine of Husbandrie, Moraltie, and Pietie; with a perpetual Calendar of Good and Bad Daies; Not superstitious, but necessarie (as farre as naturall Causes compell) for all men to observe, and difference in following their affaires. *Nec caret umbra Deo.* London, Printed by H. L. for Miles Partrich, and are to be solde at his Shop neare Saint Dunstans Church in Fleetstreet 1618

[This title-page is given at full length, because the existence of the book it belongs to (which is in Mr. Steevens's possession) has been questioned by the late Mr. Warton, History of English Poetry, vol. iii. p. 446.]

MUSÆUS.

Marlowe's Hero and Leander, with the first Book of Lucan, 4to. 1600

There must have been a former Edition *, as a second Part was published by Henry Petowe 1598

* This translation, or at least Marlowe's part in it, must have been published before 1599, being twice mentioned in Nash's Lenten Stuff, &c. which bears that date. "Leander and Hero, of whom divine Musæus sung, and a diviner muse than him, Kit Marlow." Again, "She sprung after him, and so resigned up her priesthood, and left worke for Musæus and Kit Marlow."

Among the entries at Stationers' Hall I find the following made by John Wolfe in 1593, Sept. 8th. "A booke entitled Hero and Leander, being an amorous poem devised by Christopher Marlow."

At the same time, "Lucan's first book of the famous Cyvill Warr betwixt Pompey and Cæsar. Englished by Christopher Marlow."

Again, in 1597, "A booke in English called Hero and Leander."

Again, April 1598, "The seconde Parte of Hero and Leander by Henry Petowe." Andrew Harris entered it.

Again, in 1600, "Hero and Leander by Marlowe."

In 1614 an entire translation of Lucan was published by Sir Arthur Gorges, and entered as such on the same books.

- Musæus's Poem of Hero and Leander, imitated by Christopher Marlow, and finished by Geo. Chapman, 4to. Lond. 1606

EURIPIDES.

- Jocasta, a tragedy, from the Phœnissæ of Euripides, by Geo. Gascoigne, and Mr. Francis Kinwelmershe, 4to. Lond. 1556

PLATO.

- Axiochus, a Dialogue, attributed to Plato, by Edm. Spenser, 4to*. 1592

DEMOSTHENES.

- The three Orations of Demosthenes, chiefe Orator among the Grecians, in favour of the Olynthians, with those his fower against Philip of Macedon, &c. by Tho. Wylson, Doctor of the Civill Lawes, 4to. 1570

ISOCRATES.

- Isocrates's sage admonition to Demonicus, by R. Nutthall, 8vo. Lond. 1557, 12mo. and 1585
Isocrates's Doctrinal of Princes, by Syr Tho. Elliot, Lond. 8vo. 1534
Isocrates's Orat. intituled Evagoras, by Jer. Wolfe, 8vo. 1581
Three Orations of moral Instructions, one to Demonicus, and two to Nicocles, King of Salamis, translated from Isocrates, by Tho. Forrest, 4to. 1580

LUCIAN.

- Necromantia, a Dialog of the Poete Lucyen between Menippus and Philonides, for his Fantesye faynd for a mery Pastyme, in English Verse and Latin Prose.
Toxaris, or the Friendship of Lucian, by A. O. Lond. 8vo. 1565

HERODOTUS.

- The famous Hystory of Herodotus†, in nine Bookes, &c. by B. R. Lond. 1584

* This book was entered in May, 1592, at Stationers' Hall.

† Among the entries in the books at Stationers' Hall this appears to be one:

"John Denham.] The famous Historye of Herodotus in Englyshe, June 13, 1581."

N. B. This Piece contains only the two first Books, viz. the Clio and Euterpe. The Translator says in his Preface, "As these speede, so the rest will follow." 4to.

THUCYDIDES.

The History writtome by Thucydides, &c. translated out of the Frenche of Claude de Seyssel, Bishop of Marseilles, into the Englishe language, by Tho. Nicolls, Citizeine and Goldsmyth of London, fol. 1550*

POLYBIUS.

Hystories of the most famous and worthy Cronographer, Polybius, by Christopher Watson, 8vo. 1568
This Work consists of extracts only.

DIODORUS SICULUS†.

The History of the Successors of Alexander, &c. out of Diodorus Siculus and Plutarch, by Tho. Stocker. Lond. 4to. 1569

APPIAN.

An aunciente Hystorie, &c. by Appian‡ of Alexandria, translated out of diverse Languages, &c. by W. B. 4to. Lond. 1578

JOSEPHUS.

Josephus's History, &c. translated into English, by Tho. Lodge, fol. Lond. 1602—1609, &c.

ÆLIAN.

Ælion's Registre of Hystories, by Abraham Fleming, 4to. 1576

* On the Stationers' books in 1607 either this or some other translation is entered, called "The History of Thucydides the Athenian, translated into English."

† Caxton tells us, that "Skelton had translated Diodorus Siculus, the Epistles of Tulle, and diverse other Workes:" but I know not that they were ever printed.

‡ In the first Volume of the entries in the books of the Stationers' Company, Feb. 5, 1577, is the following:

"Henry Binneman.] Appianus Alexandrinus of the Romaine Civill Warres."

HERODIAN.

The Historie of Herodian, &c. transl. oute of Greeke into Latin, by Angelus Politianus, and out of Latin into Englyshe, by Nych. Smyth. Imprinted at London, by William Copland, 4to *.

PLUTARCH.

Plutarch's Lives†, by Sir Tho. North, from the Fr. of Amyot, Bishop of Auxerre, fol. 1579, 1602, 1603
 Plutarch's Morals, by Dr. Philemon Holland 1603 §
 Plutarch of the Education of Children, by Sir Tho. Elyott, 4to.
 The Preceptes of that excellent Clerke and grave Philosopher, Plutarche, for the Preservation of Healthe, 8vo. 1543

ARISTOTLE.

The Ethiques of Aristotle, &c. by John Wylkinson. Printed by Grafton, Printer to King Edw. VI. 8vo. B. L. 1547 ||
 The Secrete of Secretes of Aristotle, &c. translated out of the Frenche, &c. Lond. 8vo. 1528
 Aristotle's Politiques, &c.** from the Fr. by J. D. fol. Lond. 1598

* Oct. 1591, Herodian in English was entered at Stationers' Hall by — Adams.

† Thus entered in the books of the Stationers' Company:

"April 1579—Vautrouller—Wright, a booke in Englishe called Plutarch's Lyves."

§ On the Stationers' books in the year 1600 is the following entry:

"A booke to be translated out of French into Englishe, and so printed, called the Morall Woorkes of Plutarque." Again, in 1602. Again, in the same year, "The moral worke of Plutarque, being translated out of French into English."

|| Of the Ethicks of Aristotle some more early translation must have appeared; as Sir Tho. Elyot, in his Boke named the Governour, 1537, says, "they are to be learned in Greke; for the translations that we have, be but a rude and grosse shadowe of the eloquence and wysdome of Aristotle."

** This translation is entered in the books at Stationers' Hall. "Adam Islip.] Aristotle's Politiques with expositions; to be translated into Englishe by the French copie, 1598."

XENOPHON.

The eight Bookes of Xenophon, containing the Institution, Schole, and Education of Cyrus, the noble King of Persye, &c. transl. out of Gr. into Engl. by Mr. William Bercher, Lond. 12mo. .. 1567 and 1569

Ditto by Dr. Philemon Holland.

Xenophon's Treatise of House-hold, right connyngly transl. out of the Greke tongue, &c. by Gentian Hervet, &c. 8vo. Lond. 1532, 8vo. 1534, 1544, 8vo. 1573

The Arte of Riding from Xenophon, &c. Lond. 4to. 1584

EPICTETUS*.

The Manuell of Epictetus, transl. out of Greeke into French, and now into English, &c. Also the Apothegmes, &c. by James Sandford, Lond. 12mo. 1567

CEBES.

The Table of Cebes, the Philosopher. How one may take profite of his ennemies. Translated out of Plutarche.

A Treatise perswadyng a man paciently to suffer the Death of a Freend. Imprynted at London, in Flete-streete by Thomas Berthelet.

EUNAPIUS SARDIANUS†.

The Lyves of Phylosophers and Orators, from the Greek of Eunapius, 4to. 1579

ACHILLES TATIUS.

The most delectable and pleasant Hist. of Clitophon and Leucippe, from the Greek of Achilles Tattius, &c. by W. B. 4to. 1597§

* In the books of the Stationers' Company, Feb. 12, 1581, Tho. Easte entered Enchiridon in English.

† Thus entered in the books of the Stationers' Company. "Richard Jones.] The Lives of divers excellent Orators and Philosophers written in Greeke by Enapius of the city of Sardis in Lydia, and translated into Englishe by ——."

§ This book was entered in the same year by Thomas Creede, on the books of the Stationers' Company.

M. ANTONINUS*.

The Golden Boke of Marcus Aurelius, Emperour and eloquent Orator, 12mo. Lond. 1553

Translated out of Fr. into Eng. by Sir John Bouchier, Kt. &c. &c.

Other editions of this are in 1534, 1535, 1536, 1537, 1559, 1586, 1588

DIONYSIUS.

Dionysius's Description of the Worlde. Englyshed by Tho. Twyne, 8vo. Lond. 1572

EUCLID.

Euclid's Elements of Geometry, transl. into Engl. by Rich. Candish, who flourished, A. D. 1556

Euclid's Elements, Pref. by John Dee, Lond. 1570

HIPPOCRATES.

The Aphorismes of Hippocrates, redacted into a certaine Order, and translated by Humfrie Llhyd, 8vo. 1585

See Granger's Biographical History, vol. i. p. 270.

GALEN.

Galen's Two Books of Elements, translated into Engl. by J. Jones, 4to. Lond. 1574

Certayne Workes of Galen, englyshed by Tho. Gale, 4to. 1586

HELIODORUS.

The Beginning of Æthiopical History in Engl. Hexameters, by Abrah. Fraunce, 8vo. Lond. 1591†

* This book is only introduced, that an opportunity may be obtained of excluding it from any future catalogue of translated classicks. It was a fraud of Guevara's, but not undetected; for Chapman, in his Gentleman Usher, 1602, speaks of the book as Guevara's own. "If there be not more choice words in that letter, than in any three of Guevara's Golden Epistles, I am a very ass." See his article in Bayle. Our countryman Elyott did somewhat of the same kind. He pretended to translate the Actes and Sentences notable, of the Emperor Alexander Severus (from the Greek of Encolpius). See Fabricius' and Tanner's Bibliothec. &c.

† A translation of the same book is likewise entered at Stationers' Hall, 1602, and again twice in 1604, for different printers.

Heliodorus's *Æthiopic Hist.* transl. by Tho. Underdown,
B. L. 4to. Lond. 1577 and 1587

ÆSOP.

Esop's Fables in true Orthography, with Grammar notes,
translated out of the Latin by William Bullaker, B. L.
8vo. 1585

VIRGIL.

The Boke of Eneydos, &c. by Caxton, fol. Lond. prose
1490

The thirteen Bukes of Eneados in Scottish Metir, by
Gawin Douglas, 4to. Lond. 1553

Certaine Bookes of Virgiles *Æneis* * turned into English
Metir, by the right honourable Lorde, Henry Earle
of Surrey, 4to. Lond. 1557

The first seven Bookes of the Eneidos, by Phaer, Lond.
4to. B. L. 1558

This Translation is in rhyme of fourteen syllables.

The nine first Bookes, &c. by Phaer †, 4to. Lond. ... 1562

* This is a translation of the second and fourth books into
blank verse, and is perhaps the oldest specimen of that metre in
the English language.

† The following "Epytaphe of Maister Thomas Phayre," is
found in a very scarce book entitled "Eglogs, Epytaphes, and
Sonettes. Newly written by Barnabe Googe, 1563, 15 Marche.
Imprynted at London by Thomas Colwell, for Raffe Newbery,
dwelyng in Fletestrete a little aboue the Conduit in the late shop
of Thomas Bartelet."

"The hawtye verse y^t Maro wrote
"made Rome to wonder muche,
"And meruayle none, for why the style
"And weightynes was suche,
"That all men iudged Parnassus mownt
"had clefte her selfe in twayne,
"And brought forth one that seemd to drop
"from out Mineruaies brayne.
"But wonder more maye Bryttane great
"wher Phayre did florysh late,
"And barreyne tong with swete accord
"reduced to such estate :
"That Virgils verse hath greater grace
"in forrayne foote obtaynde,
"Than in his own, who whilst he lyued
"eche other poets staynde.

- The thirteene Bookes of Eneidos, by Phaer and Twine, 4to. Lond. [1573] 1584, 1596, 1607, &c.*
- The first four Bookes of Virgil's Æneis, translated into Engl. heroic Verse, by Richard Stanyhurst †, &c. 12mo. Lond. 1583
- The Bucolickes of Publius Virgilius Maro, &c. by Abraham Fleming, drawn into plaine and familiar Englyshe, Verse for Verse, 4to. B. L. 1575
- The two first Eclogues of Virgil. By W. Webbe §; inserted in his Discourse of Englysh Poetrie .. 1586
- Virgil's Eclogues and Georgicks, translated into blank Verse by the same Author, Lond. 1589
- The Lamentation of Corydon for the Love of Alexis, Verse for Verse, out of Latine.
- This is translated into English Hexameters, and printed at the end of the Countesse of Pembroke's Iyychurch, 1591. By Abraham Fraunce, 4to. bl. 1 ||.

“ The noble H. Hawarde once,
 “ that raught eternall fame,
 “ With mighty style did bryng a pece
 “ of Virgils worke in frame.
 “ And Grimaold gaue the lyke attempt,
 “ and Douglas wan the ball,
 “ Whose famouse wyt in Scottysh ryme
 “ had made an ende of all.
 “ But all these same dyd Phayre excell
 “ I dare presume to wryte,
 “ As muche as doth Apolloes beames
 “ the dymmet starre in lyght.
 “ The enuyous fates (O pytie great)
 “ had great disdayne to se
 “ That us amongst there shuld remayn
 “ so fyne a wyt as he:
 “ And in the midst of all his toyle
 “ dyd force him hence to wende,
 “ And leaue a worke unperfyt so
 “ that never man shall ende.”

* Among the entries in the books of the Stationers' Company, is the following. “ Tho. Creede] Virgil's Æneidos in Englishe verse, 1595.” Again, in 1600. Again, his Bucolics and Georgics in the same year.

† The copy which I have seen, was in 4to. printed at Leiden, and was entered as such on the books of the Stationers' on the 24th of January, 1582.

§ They are translated into English hexameters. BOSWELL.

|| It is also found in his Lawiers Logike, 1588. BOSWELL.

Virgil's *Culex* paraphrased, by Spenser. See his works.

HORACE.

- The fyrst twoo Satars or poyses of Orace, Englished, by Lewes Euans, schole-master 1564
- Two Bookes of Horace his Satyres Englyshed, accordyng to the Prescription of Saint Hierome, 4to. B. L. Lond. 1566
- Horace his Arte of Poetrie, Pistles* and Satyrs Englished, by Tho. Drant, 4to. Lond. 1567
- Horace's Art of Poetry was also translated loosely into prose by W. Webbe, together with Epistles *ad Mecænatem* &c. in his Discourse of English Poetrie 1586

OVID.

- The fiftene Bookes of Metamorphoseos. In which ben contaynid the Fables of Ovid, by William Caxton, Westm. fol. 1480
- The four first Bookes of Ovid, transl. from the Latin into English Meetre, by Arthur Golding, Gent. 4to. B. L. Lond. 1565
- †The fifteen Bookes of P. Ovidius Naso, &c. by Arthur Golding, 4to. Bl. L. Lond. 1567
- D°. 1576
- [Another in 1575 according to Ames. A former Edition was in 1572, in Rawlinson's catal.]
- D°. 1587, D°. 1612
- The pleasant Fable of Hermaphroditus and Salmacis, 8vo. Lond. 1565
- The Fable of Ovid treating of Narcissus, transl. out of Latin into Engl. Mytre, with a Moral ther unto very pleasant to rede, 4to Lond. 1590
- The Heroycall Epistles, &c. set out and translated by Geo. Tuberville, Gent. &c. B. L. 12mo. Lond †. 1567, 1569, and 1600
- The three first Bookes of Ovid de Tristibus, transl. into English, by Tho. Churchyard, 4to. Lond. 1580§

* There is an entry at Stationers' Hall of the Epistles of Horace in 1591.

† Among the Stationers' entries I find in 1594, "A booke entitled Oenone and Paris, wherein is described the extremity of love," &c. This may be a translation from Ovid.

§ This book was entered at Stationers' Hall by Tho. Easte, July 1, 1577, and by Thomas Orwin in 1591.

- Ovid his *Invective against Ibis*, translated into Eng. Meeter, &c. 12mo. Lond. 1569*
- And, by Tho. Underwood 1577
- Certaine of Ovid's *Elegies* by C. Marlow †, 12mo. At Middleburgh No date.
- All Ovid's *Elegies*, three Bookes. By C. M. At Middleburgh, 12mo. Somewhat larger than the preceding edition.
- ‡ Ovidius Naso, his *Remedy of love*, translated and entitled to the youth of England, 4to. 1600
- Salmacis and Hermaphroditus, by Fra. Beaumont, 4to. 1602
- He likewise translated a Part of the *Remedy of Love*. There was another Translation of the whole, by Sir Tho. Overbury, 8vo. without date §
- "I learn (says the Rev. Tho. Warton, *Hist. of English Poetry*, vol. iii. p. 415,) from Coxeter's notes, that the *Fasti* were translated into English verse before the year 1570."

PLAUTUS.

- Menæchmi*, by W. W. Lond. || 1595

MARTIAL.

- Flowers of Epigrams* (from Martial particularly) by Tim. Kendall, 8vo. ** 1577

* Among the entries in the books of the Stationers' Company is the following: "Henry Bynneman.] July 1, 1577, Ovid's *Invective against Ibis*. Bought of Thomas Easte."

† In the forty-first of Queen Elizabeth these translations from Ovid were commanded by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, to be burnt at Stationers' Hall.

§ On the books of the Stationers' Company, Dec. 23, 1599, is entered, Ovidius Naso his *Remedy of Love*. Again, in the same year, Ovydes *Epistles in Englishe*, and Ovydes *Metamorphosis in Englyshe*.

|| This piece was entered at Stationers' Hall, June 10th, 1594. In 1520, viz. the 11th year of Henry VIII. it appears from Holinshed that a comedy of Plautus was played before the King.

** Entered at Stationers' Hall, Feb. 1576.

TERENCE.

Terens in Englysh, or the translacyon out of Latin into English of the first comedy of Tyrens callyd Andrea. Supposed to be printed by J. Rastell*.

* As the following metrical introduction to this play, relates chiefly to the improvements at that time supposed to have been made in the English language, I could not prevail on myself to suppress it:

THE POET.

" The famous renown through the worlde is sprong
 " Of poetys ornat that usyd to indyte
 " Of dyvers matters in theyr moder tong
 " Some toke upon them translacions to wryte
 " Some to compile bokys for theyr delyte
 " But in our English tong for to speke playn
 " I rede but of few have take any gret payn.
 " Except master Gowre which furst began
 " And of moralite wrote ryght craftely
 " Than master Chaucer that excellent man
 " Which wrote as compendious as elyglyntly
 " As in any other tong ever dyd any
 " Ludgate also which adournyd our tong
 " Whose noble famys through the world be sprong.
 " By these men our tong is amplyfyed so,
 " That we therin now translate as well as may
 " As in eny other tongis other can do.
 " Yet the Greke tong and Laten dyvers men say
 " Have many wordys can not be Englyshid this day
 " So lyke wyse in Englysh many wordys do habound
 " That no Greke nor Laten for them can be found.
 " And the cause that our tong is so plenteouse now
 " For we kepe our Englysh contynually
 " And of other tongis many wordis we borow
 " Which now for Englysh we use and occupy
 " These thingis have given corage gretly
 " To dyvers and specyally now of late
 " To them that this comedy have translate.
 " When all discrete men now do besech
 " And specyally lernyd men to take no dysdayn
 " Though this be compyld in our vulgare spech
 " Yet lernyng thereby some men may attayn
 " For they that in this comedy have take payn
 " Pray you to correct where faut shall be found
 " And of our matter so here is the ground."

Andria, the first Comedy of Terence, by Maurice Kyffin, 4to.	1588
Terence in English, by Richard Bernard, 4to. Cam- bridge *	1598
Flowers of Terence	1591

SENECA.

- Seneca his Tenne Tragedies †, translated into Englysh by
different Translators, 4to. Lond. 1581
- A frutefull worke of Lucius Anneus Seneca, named the
Forme and Rule of Honest Lyvyng, both in the
Latin tongue and the Englyshe, lately translated by
Robert Whyttynton, Poet Laureate: and now newlye
imprynted, 12mo. Wm. Myddleton 1546
- A frutefull Worke of Lucius Anneus Seneca, called the
Myrrour or Glasse of Maners and Wysedome, both
in Latin and Englyshe, lately translated by Robert

In the metrical peroration to this piece, is the following stanza:

“ Wherefore the translatours now require you this
 “ Yf ought be amys ye wold consyder
 “ The Englysh almost as short as the Latten is
 “ And styll to kepe ryme a dyfficult matter
 “ To make the sentence opynly to appere
 “ Which if it had a long expocysion
 “ Then were it a comment and no translacyon.”

* At Stationers’ Hall in 1597, “ the second comedy of Terence, called Eunuchus,” was entered by W. Leake; and the first and second comedie in 1600.

† In the first volume of the entries of the Stationers’ Company, Aug. 1579, Rich. Jones and John Charlewood entered the 4th tragedie of Seneca. And again all the ten in 1581.

“ It is remarkable” says Mr. Warton, (History of English Poetry, vol. iii. p. 393,) “ that Shakspeare has borrowed nothing from the English Seneca. Perhaps a copy might not fall in his way. Shakspeare was only a reader by accident. Holinshed and translated Italian novels supplied most of his plots or stories. His storehouse of learned history was North’s Plutarch. The only poetical fable of antiquity, which he has worked into a play, is Troilus. But this he borrowed from the romance of Troy. Modern fiction and English history were his principal resources. These perhaps were more suitable to his taste: at least he found that they produced the most popular subjects. Shakspeare was above the bondage of the classicks.”

- Whyttynton, Poet Laureate: and nowe newly im-
 prynted, 12mo. Wm. Middleton..... 1547
 Lucii Annei Senecæ ad Gallionem de Remediis Fortuito-
 rum. The remedies against all casuall chaunces.
 Dialogus inter Sensum et Rationem. A Dialogue
 betwene Sensualyte and Reason. Lately Translated
 out of Latyne into Englyshe, by Robert Whyttynton,
 Poet Laureate, and now newly imprinted, 12mo.
 Wm. Myddleton..... 1547
 Seven Bookes of Benefyting*, by Arthur Golding,
 4to. 1577

LUCAN.

- Lucan's First Booke, translated line for line, by Chr.
 Marlow, 4to. Lond. Printed by P. Short for Walter
 Burre 1593, and 1600 †

LIVY.

- Livius (Titus †) and other Authores Historie of Annibal
 and Scippio, translated into English, by Anthony
 Cope, Esquier, B. L. 4to. Lond.....1545
 The Romane Hist. &c. by T. Livius of Padua. Also the
 Breviaries of L. Florus, &c. by D. Philemon Holland,
 fol. Lond. 1600

TACITUS.

- The End of Nero and Beginning of Galba. Fower
 Bookes of the Histories of Cornelius Tacitus. The
 Life of Agricola, by Sir Hen. Saville, 4to. Lond. 1591
 Annales of Tacitus, by Richard Grenaway, fol. 1598

* In the first volume of the entries in the books of the Sta-
 tioners' Company is the following: " March 26, 1579, Seneca
 de Beneficiis in Englyshe."

† Perhaps we may add to this list a translation of Valerius
 Flaccus, by Nycholas Whyte, 1565. See Mr. Steevens's note
 on the Merchant of Venice, vol. v. p. 92. n. 2. BOSWELL.

‡ In the first volume of the entries in the books of the Sta-
 tioners' Company, anno 1597, is the following note: " Memo-
 randum that Mr. Alexander Nevill, Gent. is appointed to trans-
 late Titus Livius into the Englyshe tongue: expressed, the same
 is not to be printed, by anie man, but only such as shall have
 his translacion." Again, in 1598, The Historie of Titus Livius
 was entered by Adam Islip.

SALLUST.*

The Famous Cronycle of the Warre, which the Romyns had against Jugurth, &c. compyled in Lat. by the renowned Romain Sallust, &c. translated into Englishe, by Sir Alex. Barclay Preest, &c. Printed by Pynson, fol.

D°.

Lond. pr. by Joh. Waley, 4to. 1557
 The Conspiracie of Lucius Catiline, translated into Eng. by Tho. Paynell, 4to. Lond. 1541 and 1557
 The two most Worthye and Notable Histories, &c. Both written by C. C. Sallustius, and translated by Tho. Heywood, Lond. sm. fol. 1608

SUETONIUS.

Suetonius, translated by Dr. Phil. Holland, fol. Lond. 1606†

CÆSAR ‡.

Cæsar's Commentaries, as touching British affairs. Without name, printer, place, or date; but by the type it appears to be Rastell's Ames, p. 148.
 The eight Bookes of Caius Julius Cæsar, translated by Arthur Golding, Gent. 4to. Lond. 1565 and 1590
 Cæsar's Commentaries, (de Bello Gallico) five Bookes, by Clement Edmundes, with observations, &c. Fol. 1600
 De Bello Civili, by D°. three Bokes, Fol. 1609
 D°. by Chapman 1604

JUSTIN.

The Hist. of Justine, &c. by A. G. [Arthur Golding] Lond. 4to. 1564 and 1578
 D°. by Dr. Phil. Holland 1606

* A translation of Sallust was entered at Stationers' Hall in 1588. Again in 1607, The Historie of Sallust in Englishe.

† This translation was entered at Stationers' Hall in 1604.

‡ In the entries made in the books of the Stationers' Company is the following:

"John Charlewood] Sept. 1581, Abstracte of the Historie of Cæsar and Pompeius."

D°. by G. W. with an Epitomie of the Lives, &c. of the
Romaine Emperors from Aurelius Victor, fol. 1606

Q. CURTIUS.

The Historie of Quintus Curtius, &c. translated, &c. by
John Brende, 8vo. Lond. 1543
Other Editions were in, 1561, 1570, 1584, 1592 *

EUTROPIUS.

Eutropius englished, by Nic. Haward, 8vo..... 1564

A. MARCELLINUS.

Ammianus Marcellinus, translated by Dr. P. Holland,
Lond. fol. 1609

CICERO.

Cicero's Familiar Epistles by J. Webbe, sm. 8vo. No date.
Certain select Epistles into English, by Abraham Flem-
ming, 4to, Lond. 1576

Those Fyve Questions which Marke Tullye Cicero dis-
puted in his Manor of Tusculanum, &c. &c. Englyshed
by John Dolman, sm. 8vo. Lond. 1561

The Booke of Freendship of Marcus Tullie Cicero, 12mo.
Anno Domini 1550

Imprinted at London in Fletestreete in the hous of
Tho. Berthelette.

Dedicated to Katharine Duchesse of Suffolke, by John
Harrynton.

Translated, as it appears, by him from the French while
in prison.

Marcus Tullius Cicero †, three Bookes of Duties, tourned

* In the Stationers' books this or some other translation of the
same author was entered by Richard Tottell, Feb. 1582, and
again by Tho. Creede, &c. 1599.

† Mattaire says [Ann. Typog. B. 290] "in florulentâ tituli
margunculâ (vulgo vignette) superiore, inscribitur 1534." This
was a wooden block used by the printer Tottel, for many books
in small 8vo. and by no means determines their date. There
may, however, have been some earlier translation than any here
enumerated, as in Sir Thomas Elyot's *Boke named the Governour*,
1537, is mentioned "the worke of Cicero, called in Latine De
Officiis, whereunto yet is no *propre* English worde," &c.

out of Latin into English, by Nic. Grimalde* 1555,
1556, 1558, 1574.

Ames says 1553; perhaps by mistake.

The thre Bokes of Tullius Offyce, &c. translated, &c. by
R. Whyttington, Poet Laureate, 12mo. Lond. 1533,
1534, 1540, and 1553 †

The boke of Tulle of Old Age, translated by Will. Wyr-
cestre, alias Botaner. Caxton, 4to ‡. 1481

* An Epytaphe of the death of Nicholas Grimaold. [Among
Barnaby Googe's Poems already mentioned.]

- “ Behold this fletyng world how al things fade
 “ Howe eury thyng doth passe and weare awaye,
 “ Eche state of lyfe by comon course and trade
 “ Abydes no tyme, but hath a passyng daye.
 “ For looke as lyfe that pleasaunt dame hath brought
 “ The pleasaunt yeares and dayes of lustynes,
 “ So death our foe consumeth all to nought,
 “ Enuyng these with darte doth us oppresse.
 “ And that whiche is the greatest gryfe of all,
 “ The gredye grype doth no estate respect,
 “ But where he comes he makes them down to fall,
 “ Ne staves he at the hie sharpe wytted sect.
 “ For yf that wyt or worthy eloquens
 “ Or learnyng deape could moue hym to forbear,
 “ O *Grimaold* then thou hadste not yet gon hence,
 “ But heare hadst sene full many an aged yeare.
 “ Ne had the muses loste so fyne a floure,
 “ Nor had *Minerva* wept to leave the so:
 “ If wysdome myght haue fled the fatall howre
 “ Thou hadste not yet ben suffred for to go.
 “ A thousande dolytsh geese we myght have sparde,
 “ A thousande wytles heads death might have found,
 “ And taken them for whom no man had carde,
 “ And layde them lowe in deepe obliuious grounde.
 “ But fortune fauours fooles as old men saye,
 “ And lets them lyve, and takes the wyse awaye.”

† In the books belonging to Stationers' Hall, Tullies Offices
in Latin and English is entered Feb. 1582, for R. Tottell.
Again, by Tho. Orwin, 1591.

‡ In the Itinerarium of W. de Worcestre, p. 368, is the fol-
lowing notice of this book: “ 1473, die 10 Augusti presentavi

- De Senectute, by Whyttington, 8vo. No date.
- An Epistle or letter of exhortation, written in Latyne by Marcus Tullius Cicero, to his brother Quintus, the Proconsul or Deputy of Asia, wherein the office of a magistrate is cunningly and wisely described; translated into Englyshe by G. G. set forth and authorized according to the Queenes Majesties Injunctions. Prynted at London by Rouland Hall, dwelling in Golding Lane, at the sygne of the three arrows, small 8vo. 1561
- The worthie Booke of Old Age, otherwise intituled The elder Cato, &c. 12mo*. Lond. 1569
- Tullius Cicero on Olde Age, by Tho. Newton, 8vo.* Lond. 1569
- Tullius Friendship, Olde Age, Paradoxe, and Scipio's Dream, by Tho. Newton, 4to. 1577
- Tullius de Amicitia, translated into our maternal Englyshe Tongue, by W. of Worcester. Printed by Caxton, with the translation of De Senectute, fol.
- The Paradoxe of M. T. Cicero, &c. by Rob. Whyttington, Poet Laureat. Printed in Southwarke, 12mo. 1540
- Webbe translated all the sixteen Books of Cicero's Epistles, but probably they were not printed together in Shakspeare's Life-time. I suppose this, from a Passage in his Dedication.
- In 1571 Drant published—Marcus Tullius Cicero for the Poet Archias. See Warton's Hist. of English Poetry, vol. iii. p. 431.

BOETHIUS.

- Boethius, by Chaucer. Printed by Caxton, fol.
- Boethius in English Verse, by Tho. Rychard. Imprinted in the exempt monastery of Tavistock, 4to. .. 1525
- Eng. and Lat. by Geo. Colville, 4to. 1556 †

W. episcopo Wyntoniensi apud Asher librum Tullii de Senectute per me translatus in Anglicis, sed nullum regardum recepi de Episcopo."

* These are perhaps the same as the two foregoing translations.

† In the Stationers' books, Jan. 13th, 1608, Matthew Lownes entered "Anitius Manlius Torquatus Severinus Boethius, a Christian Consul of Rome, newly translated out of Latin, together with original Notes explaining the obscurest Places." Printed 8vo. 1609.

APULEIUS.

Apuleius's Golden Asse, translated into Eng. by Wm. Adlington, 4to. Lond. 1566 and 1571 *

FRONTINUS.

Stratagemes, Sleightes, and Policies of Warre, gathered by S. Julius Frontinus. Translated by Richard Morisine, 8vo. Printed by Tho. Berthelet. 1539

PLINY JUN^r.

Some select Epistles of Pliny the Younger into Eng. by Abr. Flemming, 4to. Lond. 1576

POMPONIUS MELA.

Pomponius Mela, by A. Golding, 4to. 1590

PLINY.

Pliny's Nat. Hist. by Dr. Phil. Holland, fol.† 1601

SOLINUS.

Julius Solinus Polyhistor, by A. Golding, 4to. 1587

VEGETIUS.

The four Bookes of Flavius Vegetius, concerning martial Policye, by John Sadler, 4to. 1572

RUTILIUS RUFUS.

A View of Valiaunce, translated from Rutilius Rufus, by Tho. Newton, 8vo. 1580

DARES Phryg. and DICTYS Cret.

Dares and Dictys's Trojan War, in Verse 1555

* There is an entry of this translation in the books at Stationers' Hall in 1595. Valentine Simes is the name of the printer who entered it. It is again entered by Clement Knight in 1600.

† On the books of the Stationers' Company is this entry: "Adam Islip, 1600.] The xxxvii. bookes of C. Plinius Secundus his Historie of the Worlde. To be translated out of Latin into Englyshe and so printed."

CATO and P. SYRUS.

Caton*, translated into Englyshe by Mayster Benet Burgh, &c. mentioned by Caxton.

Cathon [Parvus and Magnus] transl. &c. by Caxton 1483 †
Preceptes of Cato, with Annotations of Erasmus, &c.
24mo. Lond. 1560 and 1562

‡ Catonis Disticha, Latin and English, small 8vo. Lond.
1553

Ames mentions a Discourse of Human Nature, translated from Hippocrates, p. 428; an Extract from Pliny, translated from the French, p. 312; Æsop §, &c. by Caxton and others; and there is no doubt, but many Translations at present unknown, may be gradually recovered, either by industry or accident.

* Probably this was never printed.

† There is an entry of *Caton* at Stationers' Hall in 1591 by—Adams, in Eng. and Lat. Again, in the year 1591 by Thomas Orwin. Again, in 1605, "Four Bookes of morall Sentences, entitled Cato, translated out of Latin into English by J. M. Master of Arts."

§ "Æsop's Fables in Englyshe" were entered May 7th, 1590, on the books of the Stationers' Company. Again, Oct. 1591. Again, Esop's Fables in Meter, Nov. 1598. Some few of them had been paraphrased by Lydgate, and I believe, are still unpublished. See the Brit. Mus. Harl. 2251.

It is much to be lamented that Andrew Maunsell, a bookseller in Lothbury, who published two parts of a catalogue of English printed books, fol. 1595, did not proceed to his third collection. This, according to his own account of it, would have consisted of "Grammar, Logick, and Rhetoricke, Lawe, Historie, Poetrie, Policie," &c. which, as he tells us, "for the most part concerne matters of delight and pleasure."

LIST OF

DETACHED PIECES OF CRITICISM

ON

SHAKSPEARE, HIS EDITORS, &c.

1. A short View of Tragedy; its Original, Excellency, and Corruption. With some Reflections on Shakspeare and other Practitioners for the Stage. By Mr. Rymer, Servant to their Majesties. Small 8vo. 1693.

2. Some Reflections on Mr. Rymer's Short View of Tragedy; and an Attempt at a Vindication of Shakspeare, in an Essay directed to John Dryden, Esq. By Charles Gildon.—This Tract is found only in Gildon's Miscellaneous Letters and Essays on several Subjects, small 8vo. 1694.

3. Remarks on the Plays of Shakspeare. By C. Gildon, 8vo. Printed at the end of the seventh volume of Rowe's edition. 1710.

4. An Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakspeare, with some Letters of Criticism to the Spectator. By Mr. Dennis. 8vo. 1712.

5. Shakspeare Restored: or a Specimen of the many Errors as well committed as unamended, by Mr. Pope in his late Edition of this Poet. Designed not only to correct the said Edition, but to restore the true Reading of Shakspeare in all the Editions ever yet published. By Mr. Theobald. 4to. 1726.

6. An Answer to Mr. Pope's Preface to Shakspeare, in a Letter to a Friend, being a Vindication of the old Actors who were the Publishers and Performers of that Author's Plays. Whereby the Errors of their Edition are further accounted for, and some Memoirs of Shakspeare and the Stage History of his Time are inserted, which

were never before collected and published. By a Strolling Player. [John Roberts.] 8vo. 1729.

7. Some Remarks on the Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, written by William Shakspeare. Printed for W. Wilkins in Lombard Street. 8vo. 1736.

8. Explanatory and Critical Notes on divers Passages of Shakspeare's Plays, by Francis Peck. Printed with his New Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Mr. John Milton. 4to. 1740.

9. An Essay towards fixing the true Standards of Wit and Humour, Raillery, Satire, and Ridicule; to which is added an Analysis of the Characters of an Humourist, Sir John Falstaff, Sir Roger de Coverley, and Don Quixote. By Corbyn Morris, Esq. 8vo. 1744.

10. Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth: with Remarks on Sir Thomas Hanmer's Edition of Shakspeare. To which is affixed—Proposals for a new Edition of Shakspeare, with a Specimen. [By Dr. Samuel Johnson.] 12mo. 1745.

11. A Word or two of Advice to William Warburton, a Dealer in many Words. By a Friend. [Dr. Grey.] With an Appendix, containing a Taste of William's Spirit of Railing. 8vo. 1746.

12. Critical Observations on Shakspeare: by John Upton, Prebendary of Rochester. 8vo. First Edition, 1746. Second Edition, 1748.

13. Essay on English Tragedy, with Remarks on the Abbé Le Blanc's Observations on the English Stage. By William Guthrie, Esq. 8vo. No date, but printed in 1747.

14. An Enquiry into the Learning of Shakspeare, with Remarks on several Passages of his Plays. In a Conversation between Eugenius and Neander. By Peter Whalley, A. B. Fellow of St. John's College, Oxford. 8vo. 1748.

15. An Answer to certain Passages in Mr. W——'s Preface to his Edition of Shakspeare, together with some Remarks on the Errors and many false Criticisms in the Work itself. 8vo. 1748.

16. Remarks upon a late Edition of Shakspeare: with a long String of Emendations borrowed by the celebrated Editor from the Oxford Edition, without Acknowledgment. To which is prefixed, a Defence of the late Sir Thomas Hanmer, Bart. Addressed to the Rev. Mr. Warburton, Preacher of Lincoln's Inn, &c. 8vo. No date.

17. The Canons of Criticism and Glossary, being a Supplement to Mr. Warburton's Edition of Shakspeare. Collected from the Notes in that celebrated Work, and proper to be bound up with it. By the other Gentleman of Lincoln's Inn. [Mr. Edwards.] First Edition. 8vo. 1748. Seventh Edition, with Additions. 8vo. 1765.

Remarks on Shakspeare by Mr. Roderick, are printed at the end of this last Edition.

18. An Attempte to rescue that aunciente English Poet and Play-wrighte Maister Williame Shakspeare from the many Errours faulselly charged on him by certaine new-fangled Wittes; and to let him speak for himselfe, as right well he wotteth, when freedde from the many careless Mistakings of the heedless first Imprinters of his Workes. By a Gentleman formerly of Gray's Inn. [Mr. Holt.] 8vo. 1749.

[May 1, 1750, Mr. Holt issued out Proposals for publishing by Subscription, both in octavo and twelves, an edition of our author's plays.]

19. Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark: with a Preface, containing some general Remarks on the Writings of Shakspeare. 8vo. 1752.

20. The Beauties of Shakspeare: regularly selected from each Play: with a general Index digesting them under proper Heads. Illustrated with explanatory Notes, and similar Passages from ancient and modern Authors. By William Dodd, B. A. late of Clare Hall, Cambridge. 2 Vols. 12mo. First Edition, 1752. Second Edition, 1757. Third Edition, in 3 Vols. 1780.

21. Shakspeare Illustrated: or the Novels and Histories on which the Plays of Shakspeare are founded, collected and translated from the original Authors, with critical Remarks. In 2 Volumes. [By Mrs. Lenox.] 12mo. 1753.

A third Volume with the same Title, 1754.

22. The Novel from which the Play of the Merchant of Venice, written by Shakspeare, is taken, translated from the Italian. To which is added, a Translation of a Novel from the Decamerone of Boccaccio. 8vo. 1755.

23. Critical, Historical, and Explanatory Notes on Shakspeare, with Emendations of the Text and Metre: by Zachary Grey, LL. D. 2 Vols. 8vo. 1755.

24. The Castrated Letter of Sir Thomas Hanmer, in the Sixth Volume of BIOGRAPHIA BRITANNICA, wherein

is discovered the first Rise of the present Bishop of Gloucester's Quarrel with that Baronet, about his Edition of Shakspeare's Plays: to which is added, an impartial Account of the extraordinary Means used to suppress this remarkable Letter. By a Proprietor of that Work. [Philip Nichols.] 4to. 1763.

25. A Revisal of Shakspeare's Text, wherein the Alterations introduced into it by the more modern Editors and Criticks are particularly considered. [By Mr. Heath.] 8vo. 1765.

26. A Review of Dr. Johnson's New Edition of Shakspeare; in which the Ignorance or Inattention of that Editor is exposed, and the Poet defended from the Persecution of his Commentators. By W. Kenrick, 8vo. 1765.

27. An Examination of Mr. Kenrick's Review of Mr. Johnson's Edition of Shakspeare. [By Mr. Barclay.] 8vo. 1766.

28. A Defence of Mr. Kenrick's Review of Dr. Johnson's Shakspeare, containing a number of curious and ludicrous Anecdotes of Literary Biography. By a Friend. [i. e. W. Kenrick.] 8vo. 1766.

29. Observations and Conjectures on some Passages of Shakspeare. [By Tho. Tyrwhitt, Esq.] 8vo. 1766.

30. An Essay on the Learning of Shakspeare, addressed to Joseph Cradock, Esq. By the Rev. Dr. Richard Farmer, 8vo. 1767. Second Edition, crown 8vo. 1767. Third Edition, crown octavo, 1789.

31. A Letter to David Garrick, Esq. concerning a Glossary to the Plays of Shakspeare, on a more extensive Plan than has hitherto appeared. To which is added a Specimen. By Richard Warner, Esq. 8vo. 1768.

32. An Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakspeare, compared with the Greek and French dramattick Poets, with some Remarks upon the Misrepresentations of Monsieur de Voltaire. By Mrs. Montagu. 8vo. First Edition, 1769. Second Edition, 1776.

33. The Tragedy of King Lear as lately published, vindicated from the Abuse of the Critical Reviewers; and the wonderful Genius and Abilities of those Gentlemen for Criticism, set forth, celebrated and extolled. By the Editor of King Lear. [Charles Jennens, Esq.] 8vo. 1772.

34. Shakspeare, 4to. This piece was written by Dr. Kenrick Prescottt, and is dated Feb. 6, 1774.

35. *Cursory Remarks on Tragedy, on Shakspeare, and on certain French and Italian Poets, &c.* [By Edward Taylor, Esq.] Crown 8vo. 1774.

36. *A philosophical Analysis and Illustration of some of Shakspeare's remarkable Characters.* By William Richardson, Esq. Professor of Humanity in the University of Glasgow. 12mo. First Edition, 1773. Second Edition, 1774.

37. *The Morality of Shakspeare's Drama illustrated.* By Mrs. Griffith. 8vo. 1775.

38. *A Letter to George Hardinge, Esq. on the Subject of a Passage in Mr. Steevens's Preface to his Impression of Shakspeare.* [By the Rev. Mr. Collins.] 4to. 1777. [Dr. Johnson observed of this performance, that it was "a great gun without powder and ball."] On the title-page of a copy of it presented by Mr. Capell, together with his Shakspeariana, to Trinity College, Cambridge, is the following manuscript note: "Seen through the press by Mr. H——, &c. Note in p. 18 added, and the postscript new-molded by him. E. C." i. e. Edward Capell.

From the foregoing circumstance it appears that Mr. H—— (like Congreve's *Petulant*) assisted in writing a letter to himself. This epistle, however, (as we have since been informed,) received some additional touches from the pen of the late Lord Dacre.—*Tantæ molis erat*——. But all would not succeed. The subscribers to Mr. Capell's notes were so few, that his editor was ashamed to print their names; and the book itself is become waste paper.

39. *Discours sur Shakspeare et sur Monsieur de Voltaire, par Joseph Baretti, Secrétaire pour la Correspondence étrangere de l'Académie Royale Britannique.* 8vo. 1777.

40. *An Essay on the dramattick Character of Sir John Falstaff.* [By Mr. Maurice Morgan.] 8vo. 1777.

41. *A Letter from Monsieur de Voltaire to the French Academy.* Translated from the original Edition just published at Paris. 8vo. 1777.

42. *A Supplement to the Edition of Shakspeare's Plays published in 1778.*—Containing additional Observations by several of the former Commentators; to which are subjoined the Genuine Poems of the same Author, and Seven Plays that have been ascribed to him; with Notes, by the Editor [Mr. Malone.] and others. 2 Vols. 8vo. 1780.

43. Notes and Various Readings to Shakspeare, by Edward Capell. 3 Vols. 4to. 1781.

44. Remarks critical and illustrative on the Text and Notes of the last Edition of Shakspeare. [i. e. Mr. Steevens's Edition in 1778.] [By Mr. Ritson.] 8vo. 1783.

45. Contes moraux, amusans et instructifs, a l'usage de la jeunesse, tirés des Tragedies de Shakspeare; par M. Perrin, Editeur de la nouvelle Edition du Dictionnaire de Chambaud, &c.—A Londres, chez Robson, Cadell, & Elmsly. 1783. 12mo.

46. A familiar Address to the curious in English Poetry, more particularly to the Readers of Shakspeare. By Thersites Literarius. 8vo. 1784.

47. A Second Appendix to Mr. Malone's Supplement to the last Edition of the Plays of Shakspeare; containing additional Observations by the Editor of the Supplement. 8vo. 1793.—Of this Appendix only fifty Copies were printed.

48. Essays on Shakspeare's dramattick Characters of Richard the Third, King Lear, and Timon of Athens. To which are added, an Essay on the Faults of Shakspeare, and additional Observations on the Character of Hamlet. By Mr. Richardson. 12mo. 1784.

49. The Beauties of Shakspeare selected from his Works. To which are added, the principal Scenes in the same Author. 12mo. 1784. Printed for Kearsley.

50. Dramattick Miscellanies, consisting of critical Observations on the Plays of Shakspeare, &c. By Thomas Davies. 3 Vols. Crown 8vo. 1784.

51. Comments on the last Edition of Shakspeare's Plays. By John Monck Mason, Esq. 8vo. 1785.

52. Remarks on some of the Characters of Shakspeare. By the Author of Observations on modern Gardening. [Mr. Whateley.] 8vo. 1785.

53. Macbeth Reconsidered; an Essay intended as an Answer to Part of the Remarks on some of the Characters of Shakspeare. [By J. P. Kemble.] 8vo. 1786.

[A new edition of this Essay, enlarged and improved, appeared in 1817.]

54. A Fragment on Shakspeare, extracted from Advice to a young Poet. By the Reverend Martin Sherlock. Translated from the French. 8vo. 1786.

55. A Concordance to Shakspeare; suited to all the Editions, in which the distinguished and parallel Passages in the Plays of that justly-admired Writer are methodi-

cally arranged. To which are added, Three Hundred Notes and Illustrations entirely new. [By A. Beckett.] 8vo. 1787.

56. Imperfect Hints towards a new Edition of Shakspeare, written chiefly in the Year 1782. 4to. 1787.

The same. Part the Second and last. [By Samuel Felton.] 4to. 1788.

57. Essays on Shakspeare's dramattick Character of Sir John Falstaff, and on his Imitation of Female Characters. To which are added, some General Observations on the Study of Shakspeare. By Mr. Richardson. 12mo. 1788.

58. The Quip Modest; a few Words by way of Supplement to Remarks critical and illustrative on the Text and Notes of the last Edition of Shakspeare; occasioned by a Republication of that Edition [1785] revised and augmented by the Editor of Dodsley's Old Plays. [By Mr. Ritson.] 8vo. 1788.

59. An Index to the remarkable Passages and Words made Use of by Shakspeare; calculated to point out the different Meanings to which the Words are applied. By the Reverend Samuel Ayscough. 8vo. 1790.

60. Cursory Criticisms on the Edition of Shakspeare published by Edmond Malone. [By Mr. Ritson.] 8vo. 1792.

61. A Letter to the Reverend Richard Farmer, D. D. Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, relative to the Edition of Shakspeare published in 1790, and some late Criticisms on that Work. By Edmond Malone, Esq. 8vo. 1792.

62. Cursory Remarks upon the Arrangement of the Plays of Shakspeare, occasioned by reading Mr. Malone's Essay on the chronological Order of those celebrated Pieces. By the Reverend J. Hurdis, M. A. 8vo. 1792.

63. A Specimen of a Commentary on Shakspeare, containing, I. Notes on As You Like It. II. An Attempt to explain and illustrate various Passages, on a new Principle of Criticism, derived from Mr. Locke's Doctrine of the Association of Ideas. By the Reverend Walter Whiter. 8vo. 1794.

64. The Story of the Moor of Venice. Translated from the Italian. With Two Essays on Shakspeare, and preliminary Observations. By Wolstenholme Parr, A. M. late Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford. 1795.

65. Observations on Hamlet; and on the Motives which most probably induced Shakspeare to fix upon the Story

of Amleth, from the Danish Chronicle of Saxo Grammaticus, for the Plot of that Tragedy: being an Attempt to prove that he designed it as an indirect Censure on Mary Queen of Scots. By James Plumtre, M.A. 8vo. 1796.

66. A Letter to George Steevens, Esq. Containing a critical Examination of the Papers of Shakspeare, published by Mr. Samuel Ireland. To which are added, Extracts from Vortigern. By James Boaden, Esq. Author of Fontainville Forest, &c. 8vo. 1796.

67. Shakspeare's Manuscripts, in the Possession of Mr. Ireland, examined respecting the internal and external Evidences of their Authenticity. By Philalethes. [Mr. Webb.] 8vo. 1796.

68. Free Reflections on Miscellaneous Papers and Instruments, under the Hand and Seal of Shakspeare, in the Possession of Samuel Ireland of Norfolk Street. To which are added, Extracts from an unpublished Play, called the Virgin Queen. Written by, or in Imitation of, Shakspeare. By Francis Godolphin Waldron. London. 8vo. 1796.

69. A Comparative Review of the Opinions of Mr. James Boaden, [Editor of the Oracle] in February, March, and April, 1795, and of James Boaden, Esq. [Author of Fontainville Forest, and of a Letter to George Steevens, Esq.] in February 1796, relative to the Shakspeare MSS. By a Friend to Consistency. 8vo. 1796.

70. Vortigern under Consideration, with General Remarks on Mr. James Boaden's Letter to George Steevens, Esq. relative to the Manuscripts, Drawings, Seals, &c. ascribed to Shakspeare, and in the Possession of Samuel Ireland, Esq. 8vo. 1796.

71. An Inquiry into the Authenticity of certain Miscellaneous Papers and Legal Instruments, published Dec. 24, 1795, and attributed to Shakspeare, Queen Elizabeth, and Henry, Earl of Southampton: Illustrated by Fac-similes of the genuine Hand-writing of Shakspeare, never before exhibited; and other Authentick Documents: In a Letter addressed to the Right Hon. James, Earl of Charlemont. By Edmond Malone, Esq. 8vo. 1796.

72. An Authentic Account of the Shaksperian Manuscripts, &c. By W. H. Ireland. 8vo. 1796.

73. Mr. Ireland's Vindication of his Conduct respecting the Publication of the supposed Shakspeare MSS. Being a Preface or Introduction to a Reply to the Critical

Labors of Mr. Malone, in his "Enquiry into the Authenticity of Certain Papers, &c. &c." 8vo. 1796.

74. An Apology for the Believers in the Shakspeare-Papers, which were exhibited in Norfolk Street. By George Chalmers, Esq. F. R. S. S. A. 8vo. 1797.

75. An Investigation of Mr. Malone's Claim to the Character of a Scholar, or Critic. Being an Examination of his Inquiry into the Authenticity of the Shakspeare Manuscripts, &c. By Samuel Ireland. 8vo. 1797.

76. Remarks on Shakspeare's *Tempest*; containing an Investigation of Mr. Malone's Attempt to ascertain the Date of that Play, and various Notes and Illustrations of abstruse Readings and Passages. By Charles Dirril, Esq. [i. e. Richard Sill.] 8vo. 1797.

77. An Appendix to Observations on *Hamlet*; being an Attempt to prove that Shakspeare designed that Tragedy as an indirect Censure on Mary Queen of Scots. Containing, I. Some Observations on Dramas which professedly allude to the Occurrences and Characters of the Times in which they were written, and an Answer to the Objections brought against the Hypothesis. II. Some farther Arguments in Support of it. And, III. An Answer to the Objections brought against Dr. Warburton's Hypothesis respecting an Allusion to Mary Queen of Scots in the celebrated Passage in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. By James Plumptre, M. A. 8vo. 1797.

78. Comments on the Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, with an Appendix, containing some further Observations on Shakspeare, extended to the late Editions of Malone and Steevens. By the Right Honourable J. Monck Mason. 8vo. 1798.

79. A Supplemental Apology for the Believers in the Shakspeare-Papers: being a Reply to Mr. Malone's Answer, which was early announced, but never published; with a Dedication to George Steevens, F. R. S. S. A. And a Postscript to T. J. Mathias, F. R. S. S. A. the Author of the *Pursuits of Literature*. By George Chalmers, F. R. S. S. A. 8vo. 1799.

80. Another Essence of Malone, or the Beauties of Shakspeare's Editor. Two Parts. 8vo. 1801*.

* These illiberal and splenetick effusions were preceded by one of the same cast and complexion, entitled, "The Essence of Malone, or the Beauties of that fascinating Writer; extracted

81. The Shaksperian Miscellany. By F. G. Waldron. 4to. 1802.

82. Illustrations of Shakspeare and of Ancient Manners, with Dissertations on the Clowns and Fools of Shakspeare: or the Collection of popular Tales, entitled *Gesta Romanorum*: and on the English Morris Dance. By Francis Douce. 2 vols. 8vo. 1807.

83. Shakspeare and his Times, &c. By Nathan Drake, M. D. 2 vols. 4to. 1817.

The foregoing list might have been easily enlarged, but the truth is, that publications on this subject have of late become so very numerous, that *inopem me copia fecit*. To enumerate them all would have required a volume, and a selection might appear invidious. BOSWELL.

from his immortal Work in Five Hundred and Sixty-nine Pages, just published (and with his accustomed felicity) entitled, "*Some Account of the Life and Writings of John Dryden!!*" 8vo. 1800. All the three pieces are said to be the acknowledged productions of George Hardinge, Esq. REED.

SHAKSPEARE, FORD, AND JONSON.

I HAVE already apprized the reader that it was my intention to prefix the following statement by Mr. Steevens to Mr. Malone's Essay, which was written with a view to shew that it was totally unfounded. It originally was appended to Ben Jonson's commendatory poem on Shakspeare, which will be found without this ungracious comment in the second volume. BOSWELL.

— extinctus amabitur idem.

This observation of Horace was never more completely verified than by the posthumous applause which Ben Jonson has bestowed on Shakspeare :

“ ——— the gracious Duncan

“ Was pitied of Macbeth : marry, *he was dead.*”

Let us now compare the present eulogium of old Ben with such of his other sentiments as have reached posterity.

In April, 1748, when *The Lover's Melancholy*, by Ford, (a friend and contemporary of Shakspeare,) was revived for a benefit, the following letter appeared in the *General*, now the *Public Advertiser* :

“ ——— It is hoped that the following *gleaning of theatrical history* will readily obtain a place in your paper. It is taken from a pamphlet written in the reign of Charles I, with this quaint title : ‘ Old Ben's Light Heart made heavy by Young John's Melancholy Lover ;’ and as it contains some historical anecdotes and altercations concerning Ben Jonson, Ford, Shakspeare, and *The Lover's Melancholy*, it is imagined that a few extracts from it at this juncture, will not be unentertaining to the publick.

‘ Those who have any knowledge of the theatre in the reigns of James and Charles the First, must know, that Ben Jonson, from great critical language, *which was then the portion but of very few*, his merit as a poet, and his constant association with men of letters, did, for a considerable time, *give laws to the stage.*

‘ Ben was by nature *splenetic and sour*; with a share of envy, (for every anxious genius has some) more than was warrantable in society. By education rather *critically* than *politely* learned; which swell’d his mind into an ostentatious pride of *his own works*, and an overbearing *inexorable* judgment of his *contemporaries*.

‘ This raised him many enemies, who towards the close of his life endeavoured to dethrone *this tyrant*, as the pamphlet stiles him, out of the dominion of the theatre. And what greatly contributed to their design, was the *slights* and *malignances* which the *rigid* Ben too frequently threw out against the *lowly* Shakspeare, whose fame since his death, as appears by the pamphlet, was grown too great for Ben’s *envy* either to *bear* with or *wound*.

‘ It would greatly exceed the limits of your paper to set down all the *contempts* and *invectives* which were uttered and written by Ben, and are collected and produced in *this pamphlet*, as unanswerable and shaming evidences to prove his *ill-nature* and *ingratitude* to Shakspeare, who first introduced him to the *theatre and fame*.’

‘ But though the whole of these invectives cannot be set down at present, some few of the heads may not be disagreeable, which are as follow.

‘ That the man had *imagination* and *wit* none could deny, but that they were *ever* guided by *true judgment* in the *rules* and *conduct* of a piece, none could with justice assert, *both* being ever servile to raise the *laughter of fools* and the *wonder of the ignorant*. That he was a good poet only *in part*,—being ignorant of *all dramattick laws*,—had *little Latin—less Greek*—and speaking of plays, &c.

“ To make a child new swaddled, to proceed
 “ Man, and then shoot up, in one beard and weed,
 “ Past threescore years : or, with three rusty swords,
 “ And half of some few *foot-and-half-foot* words,
 “ Fight over York and Lancaster’s long jars,
 “ And in the tiring-house bring wounds to scars.
 “ He rather prays you will be pleas’d to see
 “ One such to-day, as *other plays* should be;
 “ Where neither *chorus* wafts you o’er the seas,” &c.

‘ This and such like behaviour, brought Ben at last from being the *lawgiver* of the theatre to be the *ridicule* of it, being *personally* introduced there in several pieces, to the *satisfaction* of the publick, who are ever fond of encouraging

personal ridicule, when the follies and vices of the object are supposed to deserve it.

‘ But what wounded his pride and fame most sensibly, was the preference which the publick and most of his contemporary wits gave to Ford’s *Lover’s Melancholy*, before his *New Inn* or *Light Heart*. They were both brought on in the *same week* and on the same stage; where Ben’s was *damn’d*, and Ford’s received with *uncommon applause*: and what made this circumstance still more galling, was, that Ford was at the head of the partisans who supported *Shakspeare’s fame* against *Ben Jonson’s Invectives*.

‘ This so incensed old Ben, that as an everlasting stigma upon his audience, he prefixed this title to his play—“The New Inn, or Light Heart. A comedy, as it was *never acted*, but most negligently play’d by some, the *King’s idle servants*; and more squeamishly beheld and censur’d by others, the *King’s foolish subjects*.” This title is followed by an abusive preface upon the audience and reader.

‘ Immediately upon this, he wrote his memorable ode against the publick, beginning—

“ Come, leave the loathed stage,
“ And the more loathsome age,” &c.

The revenge he took against Ford, was to write an epigram on him as a plagiarist.

“ *Playwright*, by chance, hearing *toys* I had writ,
“ Cry’d to my face—they were th’ elixir of wit.
“ And I must now believe him, for to-day
“ Five of my *jests*, then stoln, pass’d him a play.”

alluding to a character in *The Ladies Trial*, which Ben says Ford stole from him.

‘ The next charge against Ford was, that *The Lover’s Melancholy* was not his own, but *purloined from Shakspeare’s papers*, by the connivance of Heminge and Condel, who, *in conjunction with Ford*, had the revision of them.

‘ The malice of this charge is gravely refuted, and afterwards laughed at in many verses and epigrams, the best of which are those that follow, with which I shall close this theatrical extract :

"To my worthy friend, John Ford.

" 'Tis said, from Shakspeare's mine your play you drew :

" What need ?—when Shakspeare still survives in you ;

" But grant it were from his vast treasury reft,

" That *plund'rer Ben* ne'er made *so rich a theft*.

" *Thomas May.*"

" Upon Ben Jonson, and his Zany, Tom Randolph.

" Quoth Ben to Tom, the Lover's stole,

" 'Tis Shakspeare's every word ;

" Indeed, says Tom, upon the whole,

" 'Tis much too good for Ford.

" Thus Ben and Tom, the *dead* still praise,

" The *living* to decry ;

" For none must dare to wear the bays,

" Till Ben and Tom both die.

" Even *Avon's swan* could not escape

" These letter-tyrant elves ;

" They on his fame contriv'd a rape,

" To raise their pedant selves.

" But after times with full consent

" This truth will all acknowledge,—

" *Shakspeare and Ford* from heaven were sent,

" *But Ben and Tom* from college.

" *Endymion Porter.*"

Mr. Macklin the comedian was the author of this letter ; but the pamphlet which furnished his materials, was lost in its passage from Ireland.

The following stanza, from a copy of verses by Shirley, prefixed to Ford's *Love's Sacrifice*, 1633, alludes to the same dispute, and is apparently addressed to Ben Jonson :

" Look here *thou* that hast *malice* to the stage,

" And *impudence* enough for the whole age ;

" *Voluminously ignorant !* be vext

" To read this tragedy, and thy owne be next.

" STEEVENS."

— ubi nulla fugam reperit fallacia, victus,
In sese redit. VIRG.

I HAVE long had great doubts concerning the authenticity of the facts mentioned in the above letter, giving a pretended extract from a pamphlet of the last age, entitled

“ Old Ben’s Light Heart made heavy by young John’s Melancholy Lover,” containing some anecdotes of Shakspeare, Ben Jonson, and John Ford, the dramatick poet; and suspected that the plausible tale which the writer of that letter has told, was an innocent forgery, fabricated for the purpose of aiding a benefit, and making the town believe that The Lover’s Melancholy came from the mint of Shakspeare. Some additional information on this subject, which I have lately obtained, appears to me so decisively to confirm and establish my opinion, that I shall here, though somewhat out of place, devote a few pages to the examination of this question.

Having always thought with indignation on the tastelessness of the scholars of that age in preferring Jonson to Shakspeare after the death of the latter, I did not find myself much inclined to dispute the authenticity of a paper, which, in its general tenour, was conformable to my own notions: but the love of truth ought ever to be superior to such considerations. Our poet’s fame is fixed upon a basis *as broad and general as the casing air*, and stands in no need of such meretricious aids as the pen of fiction may be able to furnish. However, before I entered on this discussion, I thought it incumbent on me to apply to Mr. Macklin, the author of the letter in question, upon the subject: but his memory is so much impaired, (he being now in the ninety-first year of his age,) that he scarcely recollects having written such a letter, much less the circumstances attending it. I ought, however, to add, that I had some conversation with him a few years ago upon the same topick, and then strongly urged to him that no kind of disgrace could attend his owning that this letter was a mere *jeu d’esprit*, written for an occasional harmless purpose: but he persisted in asserting that the pamphlet of which he has given an account, (for which I in vain offered by a publick advertisement, continued for some time in the newspapers, to pay two guineas, and of which no copy has been found in any publick or private library in the course of forty years,) was once in his possession; was printed in quarto, and bound up with several small political tracts of the same period; and was lost with a large collection of old plays and other books, on the coast of Ireland, in the year 1760. I cannot therefore boast, *habeo confitentem reum*. However, let the point be tried by those rules of evidence which regulate

trials of greater importance; and I make no doubt that I shall be able to produce such testimony as shall convict our veteran comedian of having, sportively, ingeniously, and falsely, (though with no malice afore-thought,) invented and fabricated the narrative given in the letter already mentioned, contrary to the Statute of Biography, and other wholesome laws of the Parnassian Code, in this case made and provided, for the security of the rights of authors, and the greater certainty and authenticity of dramattick history.

Nor let our poet's admirers be at all alarmed, or shrink from this discussion; for after this slight and temporary fabrick, erected to his honour, shall have been demolished, there will still remain abundant proofs of the gentleness, modesty, and humility of Shakspeare; of the overweening arrogance of old Ben; and of the ridiculous absurdity of his partizans, who for near a century set *above* our great dramattick poet a writer whom no man is now hardy enough to mention as even his competitor.

I must premise, that the *Lover's Melancholy*, written by John Ford, was *announced* for representation at Drury-lane theatre on Friday the 22d of April, 1748. Mr. Steevens has mentioned that it was performed for a *benefit*; but the person for whose benefit this play was acted is in the present case very material: it was performed *for the benefit of Mrs. Macklin*; and consequently it was the *interest* of Mr. Macklin that the entertainment of that night should prove profitable, or in other words that such expectation should be raised among the frequenters of the play-house as should draw together a numerous audience. Mr. Macklin, who had then been on the stage about twenty-five years, was sufficiently conversant with the arts of puffing, which, though now practised with perhaps superior dexterity, have at all times (by whatever name they may have gone) been tolerably well understood: and accordingly on Tuesday the 19th of April, three days before the day appointed for his wife's benefit, he inserted the following letter in *The General* (now *The Publick*) *Advertiser*, which appears to have escaped the notice of my predecessor:

‘ Sir,

‘ As *The Lover's Melancholy*, which is to be revived on Friday next at the theatre-royal in Drury-Lane, for the

benefit of Mrs. Macklin, is a scarce play, and in a very few hands, it is hoped, that a short account of the author, his works in general, and of that piece in particular, will not be unacceptable to the publick.

‘ John Ford, Esq. was one of the Middle Temple, and though but a young man when Shakspeare left the stage, yet as he lived in strict friendship with him till he died, *which appears by several of Ford’s sonnets and verses*, it may be said with some propriety, that he was a contemporary of that great man’s.

‘ It is said that he wrote twelve or fourteen dramattick pieces, eight of which only have been collected, viz. The Broken Heart, Love’s Sacrifice, Perkin Warbeck, The Ladies’ Trial, ’Tis Pity she’s a Whore, The Sun’s Darling, a Masque, and The Lover’s Melancholy

‘ Most of those pieces have great merit in them, particularly The Lover’s Melancholy; which in the private opinion of many admirers of the stage, is written with an art, ease, and dramattick spirit, inferior to none before or since his time, Shakspeare excepted.

‘ The moral of this play is obvious and laudable; the fable natural, simple, interesting, and perfect in all its parts; the action one and entire; the time twelve hours, and the place a palace.

‘ The writing, as the piece is of that species of the drama, which is neither tragedy, nor comedy, but a play, is often in familiar, and sometimes in elevated, prose, *after the manner of Shakspeare*; but when his subject and characters demand it, he has sentiment, diction, and flowing numbers, at command.

‘ His characters are natural, and well chosen, and so distinct in manners, sentiment, and language, that each as he speaks would distinctly live in the reader’s judgment, without the common help of marginal directions.

‘ As Ford was an intimate and a professed admirer of Shakspeare, it is not to be wondered at, that *he often thinks and expresses like him*; which is not his misfortune, but his happiness; for when he is most like Shakspeare, he is most like nature. He does not put you in mind of him like a plagiarist, or an affected mere imitator; but like a true genius, who had studied under that great man, and could not avoid catching some of his divine excellence.

‘ This praise perhaps by some people may be thought too much: of that the praiser pretends not to be a judge;

he only speaks his own feeling, not with an intent to impose, but to recommend a treasure to the publick, that for a century has been buried in obscurity; which *when they have seen*, he flatters himself that they will think as well of it as he does; and should that be the case, the following verses, written by Mr. Ford's contemporaries, will shew, that neither the present publick, nor the letter-writer, are singular in their esteem of *The Lover's Melancholy*.

"To my honoured friend, Master John Ford, on his
[excellent play, *The*] * *Lover's Melancholy*.

"If that thou think'st these lines thy worth can raise,

"Thou dost mistake; my liking is no praise:

"Nor can I think thy judgment is so ill,

"To seek for bays from such a barren quill.

"Let your true critick that can judge and mend,

"Allow thy scenes and stile: I, as a friend

"That knows thy worth, do only stick my name,

"To shew my love, not to advance thy fame.

"G. DONNE."

"On [that excellent play] *The Lover's Melancholy*.

"'Tis not the language, nor the fore-plac'd rhimes

"Of friends that shall commend to after-times

"The *Lover's Melancholy*; its own worth

"Without a borrow'd praise shall set it forth.

"PHILOS †."

"Your's, B. B."

How far *The Lover's Melancholy* is entitled to all this high praise, it is not my business at present to inquire. I shall only observe, that this kind of prelude to a benefit play appears at that period to have been a common artifice. For the *Muses Looking-Glass*, an old comedy of Randolph's, being revived for the benefit of Mr. Ryan in 1748, I find an account of the author, and an high elogium on his works, in the form of a letter, inserted in the month of March, in the same newspaper.

* The words within crotchets here and below were interpolated by Mr. Macklin, not being found in the original.

† In the original, this signature is in Greek characters, Ο Φίλος; a language with which Mr. Macklin is unacquainted. In this instance therefore he must have had the assistance of some more learned friend.

In the preceding letter it is observable, we are only told that the author of *The Lover's Melancholy* lived in the strictest intimacy with Shakspeare till he died, *as appears by several of Ford's Sonnets and Verses* (which unluckily, however, *are no where to be found*); that the piece is inferior to none written before or since, except those of Shakspeare; that as Ford was an intimate and professed admirer of Shakspeare, and had studied under him, it is not to be wondered at that it should be written *in his manner*, and that the author should have caught some portion of his divine excellence; but no hint is yet given, that *The Lover's Melancholy* had a still higher claim to the attention of the town than being written in Shakspeare's manner, namely, its being supposed to be compiled from the papers of that great poet, which, after his death, as we shall presently hear, fell into Ford's hands. And yet undoubtedly this valuable piece of information was on Monday the 21st day of April, (when this letter appears to have been written,) in Mr. Macklin's possession, *if ever he was possessed of it*; for so improbable a circumstance will not, I suppose, be urged, as that he found the uncommon pamphlet in which it is said to be contained, between that day and the following Friday.

Judiciously as the preceding letter was calculated to attain the end for which it was written, it appears not to have made a sufficient impression on the publick. All the boxes for Mrs. Macklin's benefit, it should seem, were not yet taken; and the town was not quite so anxious as might have been expected, to see this transcendent and incomparable secular tragedy; though it was announced in the bills as not having been performed for one hundred years; though its moral, fable, and action, were all perfect and entire; though the time consumed in the drama was as little as the most rigid French critick could exact: and though the audience during the whole representation would enjoy the supreme felicity of beholding not a forest, an open plain, or a common room, but the inside of a palace. What then was to be done? An ordinary application having failed, Spanish flies are to be tried; for though the publick might not go to see a play *written in the manner of Shakspeare*, they could not be so insensible as not to have some curiosity about a piece, which, if the insinuations of the author's contemporaries were to be credited, was *actually written by him*; a play,

which none of them had ever seen represented, and very few had read or even heard of. Mr. Barry, a principal performer in this revived tragedy, is very *commodiously* taken ill; and the representation, which had been announced for Friday the 22d, is deferred to Thursday the 28th, of April. Full of the new idea, the letter-writer takes up his pen; but fabricks of this kind are not easily constructed, so as to be secure on every side from assault. However, in three days the whole structure was raised; and on Saturday morning the 23d of April appeared in The General Advertiser a Second Eulogy on The Lover's Melancholy, which I am now to examine.

This letter of the 23d of April which we are now to consider, being printed in a foregoing page *, the reader can easily turn to it. Before, however, I enter upon an examination of its contents, I will just observe, that the attention of the publick had been drawn in a peculiar manner to our author's productions by the publication of Dr. Warburton's long expected edition of his plays in the preceding year, and was still more strongly fixed on the same object by Mr. Edwards's ingenious Canons of Criticism, which first appeared in the month of April, 1748.

Mr. Macklin begins his second letter with the mention of a pamphlet written in the reign of Charles the First, with this quaint title—"Old Ben's Light Heart made heavy by young John's Melancholy Lover;" and as this curious pamphlet contains "some historical anecdotes and altercations concerning Ben Jonson, Ford, Shakspeare, and The Lover's Melancholy," he makes no doubt that a few extracts from it will "*at this juncture*" be acceptable to the publick.

He next observes, that Ben Jonson from great critical language, (*learning*, he should have said,) which was then the portion of but very few, from his merit as a poet, and his association with men of letters, for a considerable time gave laws to the stage. That old Ben was splenetick, sour, and envious; too proud of his own works, and too severe in his censure of those of his contemporaries. That this arrogance raised him many enemies, who were particularly offended by the *slights* and *malignancies* which the *rigid* Ben threw out against the *lowly* Shakspeare,

* See p. 402.

“ whose fame, *since his death*, as appears by the pamphlet, was grown too great for Ben’s envy either to bear with or wound.”

To give the whole of these invectives, we are then told, would take up too much room; but among other instances of Jonson’s ill-nature and ingratitude to Shakspeare, “ who first introduced him to the theatre and to fame,” it is stated, *from the pamphlet*, that Ben had asserted, that Shakspeare had indeed wit and imagination, but that they were not guided by judgment, being ever servile to raise the laughter of fools and the wonder of the ignorant; that he had little Latin, and less Greek: and the writer of the pamphlet, as a further proof of Ben’s malignity, quotes some lines from the prologue to Every Man in his Humour:

“ To make a child new swaddled, to proceed

“ Man, and then shoot up, in one beard and weed,

“ Past threescore years,” &c.

which were levelled at some of Shakspeare’s plays. The first of the lines quoted, and above given, we are told in a note, was pointed at *The Winter’s Tale*; but whether this note was furnished by the pamphlet, or by the writer of the letter, we are left to conjecture. Whichsoever of these we are to suppose, the fact is undoubtedly not true; for the new-born child introduced in *The Winter’s Tale* never does in the course of the play shoot up *man*, being no other than the lovely Perdita. In the following lines, however, of that prologue, our poet is undoubtedly sneered at.

So much for Shakspeare. We are now brought to *The Lover’s Melancholy*; the *extraordinary success* of which, the pamphlet informs us, wounded Ben the more sensibly, as it was brought out on the same stage, *and in the same week*, with his *New Inn*, or *Light Heart*, which was damned; and as Ford, the writer of *The Lover’s Melancholy*, was at the head of Shakspeare’s partizans. The ill success of the *Light Heart*, we are next told, so incensed Jonson, that, when he printed his play, he described it in the title-page, as a comedy *never acted, but most negligently played by some, the king’s idle servants, and more squeamishly beheld and censured by others, the king’s foolish subjects*; and immediately upon this, adds the letter-writer, he wrote his famous ode, “ Come,

leave the loathed stage," &c. The revenge which he took on Ford, was, we are told, (from the pamphlet,) the writing an epigram upon him, in which there is an allusion, as we are informed in a note, to a character in a play of Ford's "which *Ben says, Ford stole from him.*"

The next information which we derive from this curious pamphlet, is entirely new, no trace of it being found in the preface prefixed by the first editors to the folio edition of Shakspeare's plays in 1623, or in any other book of those times. This curious fact is, that John Ford, in conjunction with our poet's friends, Heminge and Con-dell, had the revisal of his papers after his death; and that Ben asserted, Ford's *Lover's Melancholy*, by the connivance of his associates in this trust, was stolen from those papers. This malicious charge gave birth, we are told, to many verses and epigrams, which are set forth in the pamphlet, but the letter-writer contents himself with producing two copies of these verses only*, to one of which is subscribed the name of Thomas May, and to the other these words: Endim. Porter, the supposed author of these verses."

Such is the substance of Mr. Macklin's second letter. Let us now separately examine the parts of which it is composed.

The quaint title which the writer of this letter has given to this creature of his own imagination, (for so I shall now take leave to call the pamphlet,) "*Old Ben's Light Heart made heavy by young John's Melancholy Lover,*" is, it must be acknowledged, most happily invented, and is so much in the manner of those times, that it for a long time staggered my incredulity, and almost convinced me of the authenticity of the piece to which it is said to have been affixed; and not a little, without doubt, did the inventor plume himself on so fortunate a thought. But how short-sighted is man! This very title, which the writer thus probably exulted in, and supposed would serve him,

"———— as a charmed shield,

"And eke enchanted arms that none might pierce."

* Of all the ancient poems which Chatterton pretended to have found in the famous Bristol chest, he wisely produced, I think, but *four*, that he ventured to call originals.

is one of the most decisive circumstances to prove his forgery.

Nescia mens hominum fati, sortisque futuræ!
 Turno tempus erit, magno cum optaverit emptum
 Intactum Pallanta, et cum spolia ista, diemque
 Oderit.—

———— Pallas te, hoc vulnere, Pallas
 Immolat, et pœnam scelerato ex sanguine sumit.

Ben Jonson was in his own time frequently called the *judicious* Ben, the *learned* Ben, the *immortal* Ben, but had not, I believe, at the time this pamphlet is supposed to have been published, obtained the appellation of *Old* Ben. However, as this title was given him some years afterwards by Sir John Suckling, in his Session of the Poets, which appears to have been written in August, 1637, about the time of Jonson's death, (See Strafford's Lett. vol. ii. p. 114,) which celebrated poem, as well as the language of the present day, probably suggested the combination of *Old Ben* to Mr. Macklin, I shall lay no stress upon this objection. But the other part of the title of this pamphlet—" *Young John's Melancholy Lover*," is very material in the present disquisition.—John Ford, in the Dedication to his *Lover's Melancholy*, says, that was the first *play* which he had *printed*; from which the letter-writer concluded that he must then have been a young man. In this particular, however, he was egregiously mistaken; for John Ford, who was the second son of Thomas Ford, Esq. was born at Ilsington in Devonshire, and baptized there April 17, 1586*. When he was not yet seventeen, he became a member of the Middle Temple, November 16, 1602, as I learn from the Register of that Society; and consequently in the year 1631, when this pamphlet is supposed to have been published, he had no title to the appellation of *young* John, being forty-five years old. And though *The Lover's Melancholy* was the first play that he published, he had produced the *Masque of The Sun's Darling* on the stage five years before, namely, in March, 1623-4; had exhibited one or more plays before that time; and so early as in the year 1606 had published a poem entitled *Fame's Memorial*, of which

* For this information I am indebted to the Reverend Mr. Palk, Vicar of Ilsington.

I have his original presentation-copy in MS. in my collection. These are facts, of the greater part of which no writer of that time, conversant with dramattick history, could have been ignorant. Here certainly I might safely close the evidence; for Ben Jonson was born on the 11th of June, 1574*, and consequently in 1631 was in his

* According to the best accounts. The precise year however of this poet's birth has not been ascertained. Fuller tells us, that "with all his industry he could not find him in his cradle, but that he could fetch him from his long coats;—when a little child, he lived in Hartshorne-lane near Charing-Cross." I in vain examined the Register of St. Margaret's, Westminster, and St. Martin's in the Fields, for the time of his baptism. There is a *lacuna* in the latter register from February to Dec. 1574. Ben Jonson therefore was probably born in that year, and he has himself told us that he was born on the 11th of June. This agrees with the account given by Anthony Wood, who says, that before his death in August 1637, he had completed his sixty-third year. I found in the Register of St. Martin's, that a Mrs. Margaret Jonson was married in November 1575 to Mr. Thomas Fowler. He was perhaps the poet's step-father, who is said to have been a bricklayer.

The greater part of the history of this poet's life is involved in much confusion. Most of the facts which have been transmitted concerning him, were originally told by Anthony Wood; and there is scarcely any part of his narrative in which some error may not be traced. Thus we are told, that soon after his father's death his mother married a bricklayer; that she took her son from Westminster-school, and made him work at his step-father's trade. He helped, says Fuller, at the building of the new structure in Lincoln's-Inn, where having a trowel in his hand, he had a book in his pocket: and this book Mr. Gildon has found out to be Horace. In this situation, according to Wood, being pitied by his old master, Camden, he was recommended to Sir Walter Raleigh as a tutor to his son; and after attending him on his adventures, they parted, on his return, not, as I think, says Wood, in cold blood. He *then*, we are told, was admitted into St. John's College in Cambridge, and after a short stay there, went to London, and became an actor in the Curtain playhouse: and soon afterwards, "having improved his fancy by keeping scholastick company, he betook himself to writing plays." Lastly, we are told by the same writer, on the death of Daniel [in October 1619] "he succeeded him as poet-laureat, as Daniel succeeded Spenser."

If Jonson ever worked with his step-father at his trade in Lincoln's-Inn, it must have been either in 1588, or 1593, in

fifty-seventh year ; a period of life at which, though not in the hey-day of the blood, he could with no great pro-

each of which years, as I learn from Dugdale's *Origines Juridicales*, some new buildings were erected by that society. He could not have been taken from thence to accompany young Raleigh on his travels, who was not born till 1594, nor even went abroad except with his father in 1617 to Guiana, where he lost his life. The poet might indeed about the year 1610 or 1611 have been private tutor to him ; and it is probable that their connexion was about that time, as Jonson mentions that he furnished Sir Walter Raleigh with a portion of his *History of the World*, on which Sir Walter must have been then employed ; but if the tutor and the pupil then parted in ill humour, it was rather too late for Jonson to enter into St. John's College, at the age of thirty-four or thirty-five years.

That at some period he was tutor to young Raleigh, is ascertained by the following anecdote, preserved in one of Oldys's Manuscripts :

“ Mr. Camden recommended him to Sir Walter Raleigh, who trusted him with the care and education of his eldest son Walter, a gay spark, who could not brook Ben's rigorous treatment, but perceiving one foible in his disposition, made use of that to throw off the yoke of his government : and this was an unlucky habit Ben had contracted, through his love of jovial company, of being overtaken with liquor, which Sir Walter did of all vices most abominate, and hath most exclaimed against. One day, when Ben had taken a plentiful dose, and was fallen into a sound sleep, young Raleigh got a great basket, and a couple of men, who lay'd Ben in it, and then with a pole carried him between their shoulders to Sir Walter, telling him, their young master had sent home his tutor.”—“ This, (adds Mr. Oldys,) I have from a MS. memorandum-book written in the time of the civil wars by Mr. Oldisworth, who was secretary, I think, to Philip earl of Pembroke.”

The truth probably is, that he was admitted into St. John's college as a sizar in 1588, at which time he was fourteen years old, (the usual time then of going to the University,) and after staying there a few weeks was obliged from poverty to return to his father's trade ; with whom he might have been employed on the buildings in Lincoln's Inn in 1593, when he was nineteen. Not being able to endure his situation, he went, as he himself told Mr. Drummond of Hawthornden, to the Low countries, where he served a campaign, and distinguished himself in the field. On his return, perhaps in 1594, being now used to a life of adventure, he probably began his theatrical career, as a strolling player, and after having “ rambled for some time by a

priety be called *Old*, unless by way of opposition to a *very young* man. But no such difference of age subsisted

play-waggon in the country," repaired to London, and endeavoured at the Curtain to obtain a livelihood as an actor, till, as Decker informs us, "not being able to set a *good face* upon't, he could not get a service among the mimicks."

Between that year and 1598, when *Every Man in his Humour* was acted, he probably produced those unsuccessful pieces which Wood mentions. It is remarkable that Meres in that year enumerates Jonson among the writers of *tragedy*, though no tragedy of his writing, of so early a date, is now extant: a fact which none of his biographers have noticed.

Some particulars relative to this poet, which I have lately learned, will serve to disprove another of the facts mentioned by Wood; namely, that "he succeeded Daniel as poet-laureat, [in October, 1619,] as Daniel did Spenser." I do not believe that any such office as poet-laureat existed in the time of Queen Elizabeth, and consequently Spenser never could have possessed it; nor has any proof whatsoever been produced of Daniel's having ever enjoyed that office.

Spenser, we are told by Camden, died in great poverty in 1598, and such has been the prevailing opinion ever since; but a fact which I have lately discovered, and which has not been noticed by any writer of that great poet's life, renders Camden's assertion very disputable. Spenser, I find, in February, 1590-1, obtained from Queen Elizabeth an annuity or pension of fifty pounds a year, during his life; which, the value of money and the modes of life being jointly considered, may be estimated as equal to two hundred pounds a year at this day. We see, therefore, that the incense lavished on his parsimonious mistress in the *Faery Queen*, which was published in the preceding year,* did not pass unrewarded, as all our biographical writers have supposed. The first notice I obtained of this grant, was from a short abstract of it in the Signet-office, and with a view to ascertain whether he was described as poet-laureat, I afterwards examined the patent itself, (*Patent Roll*, 33 Eliz. P. 3.) but no office or official duty is there mentioned. After the usual and formal preamble, *pro diversis causis et considerationibus*, &c. the words are, "*damus et concedimus dilecto subdito nostro, Edmundo Spenser, &c.*"

King James by letters patent dated February 3, 1615-16, granted to Ben Jonson an annuity or yearly pension of one hundred marks during his life, "*in consideration of the good and*

* The *Faery Queen* was entered on the Stationers' books by W. Ponsonby, in December, 1589.

between these two poets. If a man of fifty-seven is to be accounted old, the man of forty-five is not young.

acceptable service heretofore done, and hereafter to be done, by the said B. J." Then, therefore, and not in 1619, undoubtedly it was that he was made poet-laureat, if ever he was so constituted; but not one word is there in the grant, which I examined in the chapel of the Rolls, touching that office: unless it may be supposed to be comprehended in the words which I have just quoted. On the 23d of April, 1630, King Charles by letters patent, reciting the former grant, and that it had been surrendered, was pleased, "in consideration (says the patent) of the good and acceptable service done unto us and our said father by the said B. J. and especially to encourage him to proceed in those services of his wit and pen, which we have enjoined unto him, and which we expect from him, to augment his annuity of one hundred marks, to one hundred pounds *per ann.* during his life, payable from Christmas, 1629, and the first payment to commence at Lady-day, 1630." Charles at the same time granted him a tierce of Canary Spanish wine yearly during his life, out of his Majesty's cellars at Whitehall: of which there is no mention in the former grant. From hence, and from the present of one hundred pounds sent to Jonson by the King in 1629, we may see how extremely improbable the story is, which has been recorded on I know not what authority, and which Dr. Smollet was idle enough to insert in his History; that Ben in that year being reduced to great distress, and living in an obscure alley, petitioned his Majesty to assist him in his poverty and sickness; and on receiving ten guineas, said to the messenger who brought him the donation, "his majesty has sent me ten guineas, because I am poor and live in an alley; go and tell him that his soul lives in an alley."

None of his biographers appear to have known, that Ben Jonson obtained from King James a reversionary grant of the office of Master of the Revels. His Majesty by letters patent dated October 5, in the nineteenth year of his reign, (1621,) granted him, by the name and addition of "our beloved servant Benjamin Jonson, *gentleman*," the said office, to be held and enjoyed by him and his assigns, during his life, from and after the death of Sir George Buck and Sir John Astley, or as soon as the office should become vacant by resignation, forfeiture, or surrender: but Jonson never derived any advantage from this grant, because Sir John Astley survived him. It should seem from a passage in the *Satiromastix* of his antagonist Decker, printed in 1602, that Ben had made some attempt to obtain a reversionary grant of this place before the death of Queen Elizabeth: for *Sir Vaughan* in that piece says to *Horace* [i. e. Jonson,] "I have some cos-

The next suspicious circumstance in the letter which we are now examining, is, that in the pretended extracts from this old pamphlet most of the circumstances mentioned might have been collected by a modern writer from books of either those or subsequent times: and such *new* facts as are mentioned, can be proved to be fictions. Such of the pretended extracts as are true, are old; and such as are new, are false. Thus, to take the former class first, we are informed, (as from the pamphlet,) that our poet and Jonson were at variance; that old Ben took every means of depreciating the lowly Shakspeare; that he asserted our poet had little Latin and less Greek, and did not understand the dramattick laws*; that Jonson ridiculed some of his pieces; and that this was a strong proof of his ingratitude: Shakspeare having first introduced him to the stage.—All these facts Mr. M. might have learned from Rowe's Life of Shakspeare, and Pope's Pre-

sens-german at court shall beget you the *reversion* of the *Master of the King's Revels*, or else to be his Lord of Misrule nowe at Christmas."

It has been commonly understood, that on Ben Jonson's death in August, 1637, Sir William D'Avenant [then Mr. D'Avenant] was appointed poet-laureate in his room: but he at that time received no favour from the crown. Sixteen months afterwards, Dec. 13, 1638, in the 14th year of Charles the First, letters patent passed the great seal, granting, "in consideration of service heretofore done and hereafter to be done by William Davenant, gentleman," an annuity of one hundred pounds *per ann.* to the said W. D. *during his Majesty's pleasure*. By this patent, no Canary wine was granted; and no mention is made of the office of poet-laureate. It is at present conferred, not by letters patent, but by a warrant signed and sealed by the Lord Chamberlain, nominating A. B. to the office, with the accustomed fees thereunto belonging.

* Which Ben claimed the merit of having first taught his contemporaries. See his Verses to his old servant Richard Brome, prefixed to *The Northern Lass*, which was first acted in July, 1629:

"Now you are got into a nearer room

"Of fellowship, professing my old arts,

"And you do do them well, with good applause;

"Which you have justly gained from the stage,

"By observation of those *comick laws*

"Which I, your master, *first did teach the age*."

face to his edition; from Dr. Birch's *Life of Ben Jonson* published in 1743; from Drummond of Hawthornden's *Conversation* with that poet; from the old play entitled *The Return from Parnassus*; from Fuller's *Worthies*, Winstanley, and Langbaine; from Jonson's own verses on Shakspeare prefixed to all the editions; from his prologue to *Every Man in his Humour*; from his *Bartholemow Fair*, and his *Discoveries*; and from many other books. In Mr. Pope's Preface was found that praise, that in our poet's plays every speech might be assigned to its proper speaker without the aid of marginal directions: an encomium which perhaps is too high, even when applied to Shakspeare; but which, when applied to Ford, (as it is in Mr. Macklin's *first* letter,) becomes ridiculous.

Let us now consider the *new* facts, which for the first time are given to the publick from this rare old tract. The first new fact stated is, that Shakspeare's fame, *after his death*, grew too great for Ben either to bear with or wound. Now this was so far from being the case, that it was at this particular period that Jonson's pieces, which were collected into a volume in 1616, appear to have been in most estimation; and from the time of Shakspeare's death to the year 1625, both Ben's fame, and that of Fletcher, seem to have been at their height. In this period Fletcher produced near thirty plays, which were acted with applause; and Jonson was during the whole of that time well received in the courts of James and Charles, for each of whom he wrote several Masques, which the wretched taste of that age very highly estimated; and was patronized and extravagantly extolled by the scholars of the time, as much superior to Shakspeare. In this period also he produced his *Devil's an Ass*, and his *Staple of News*, each of which had some share of success. In the year 1631, indeed he was extremely indigent and distressed, and had been so from the year 1625, when I think he was struck with the palsy; but in consequence of this indigence and distress he was not precisely at that period an object of jealousy to the partizans of Shakspeare.

Another and a very material false fact stated from this pamphlet is, that Jonson's *New Inn* or *Light Heart*, and Ford's *Melancholy Lover*, were produced for the first time on the same stage, in *the same week*: a fact concerning

which the writer of the pamphlet, *if the pamphlet had any real existence*, could scarcely have been mistaken.

These two plays were certainly represented for the first time at *the same theatre*, namely, Blackfriars, as Mr. Macklin learned from their respective title-pages; but not in the same *week*, there being no less than *two months* interval between the production of the two pieces.

Ford's play was exhibited at the Blackfriars on the 24th of November, 1628, when it was licensed for the stage, as appears from the Office-book of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels to King Charles the First, a manuscript now before me, of which a more particular account may be found in vol. iii. [Historical Account of the English Stage, &c.]; and Jonson's New Inn on the 19th of January in the following year, 1628-9. Very soon indeed after the ill success of Jonson's piece, the King's Company brought out at the same theatre a new play called The Love-sick Maid, or the Honour of Young Ladies, which was licensed by Sir Henry Herbert on the 9th of February, 1628-9, and acted with extraordinary applause. This play, which was written by Jonson's own servant, Richard Brome, was so popular, that the managers of the King's Company, on the 10th of March, presented the Master of the Revels with the sum of two pounds, "on the good success of The Honour of Ladies;" the only instance I have met with of such a compliment being paid him. No mention whatsoever is made of The Lover's Melancholy having been attended with any extraordinary success, though Mr. M. from private motives chose to represent it as having been acted with uncommon applause.

We are next told, that Ben was so exasperated by the damnation of his piece, that he printed it with a very singular title-page, which is given; and that *immediately upon this* he wrote his celebrated Ode, "Come leave the loathed stage," &c. It is not very clear what the letter-writer means by the words, *immediately upon this*. If he means that Jonson wrote his Ode immediately after the play was damned in 1629, the assertion is made at random; if he means that immediately after he had published his play he wrote his ode, the fact is not true. The ode is printed at the end of the play, which was published in April, 1631.

The next new fact found in this curious pamphlet is, that Ben Jonson, mortified by his own defeat and the suc-

cess which Ford's play obtained, wrote the following Epigram upon his successful competitor:

" *Playwright*, by chance, hearing some toys I had writ,
 " Cry'd to my face, they were the elixir of wit;
 " And I must now believe him, for to-day
 " Five of my jests, then stolne, pass'd him a play."

This epigram, I own, is so much in the manner of the time, and particularly of Ben Jonson, that for a long time I knew not how to question its authenticity. It is so strongly marked, that every poetical reader must immediately exclaim, *aut Erasmus, aut diabolus*. Nor indeed is it to be wondered at that it is much in Ben's manner; for, —not to keep the reader longer in suspense, it *was written* by him.—Well then, says the writer of the letter in question, here you have a strong confirmation of all the other facts which you affect to doubt, and every impartial judge must acquit me of having fabricated them. This, however, we shall find a *non sequitur*: for this very epigram, though written by Jonson, is as decisive a proof of imposition as any other which I have produced. The fact is, this epigram, addressed to *Playwright*, is found among Jonson's printed poems, as are two others addressed to the same person.* Mr. M. I suppose, was possessed only

* See Jonson's Works, folio, 1616:

Epig. XLIX.

TO PLAYWRIGHT.

" *Playwright* me reades, and still my verses damnes;
 " He sayes, I want the tongue of epigrammes;
 " I have no salt; no bawdrie he doth meane,
 " For wittie, in his language, is obscene.
 " *Playwright*, I loath to have thy manners knowne
 " In my chaste booke: professe them in thine owne."

Epig. LXVIII.

ON PLAYWRIGHT.

" *Playwright*, convict of public wrongs to men,
 " Takes private beatings, and begins againe.
 " Two kindes of valour he does shew at ones,
 " Active in his braine and passive in his bones."

The person aimed at, under the name of *Playwright*, was probably Decker.

of the modern edition of Jonson's Works printed in 8vo. in 1716, and, no dates being assigned to the *poems*, thought he might safely make free with this epigram, and affix the date of the year 1630, or 1631, to it; but unluckily it was published by old Ben himself fourteen or fifteen years before, in the first folio collection of his works in 1616, and consequently could not have any relation to a literary altercation between him and Ford at the time *The New Inn* and *The Lover's Melancholy* were brought on the scene. It appears from Ben Jonson's Dedication of his Epigrams to Lord Pembroke, that most of them, though published in 1616, were written some years before*; the epigram in question, therefore, may be referred to a still earlier period than the time of its publication.

On one of the lines in this epigram, as exhibited by Mr. Macklin,

“ Five of my jests, then stolne, pass'd him a play.”

we find the following note:—“ Alluding to a character in *The Ladies' Trial*, which Ben says Ford stole from him.” If the writer of this letter had said, “ Alluding to a character in *The Ladies' Trial*, which Ford stole from Ben Jonson,” we might suppose him only mistaken; and this anachronism (supposing that the epigram had been written in 1631) might not affect the present question. But we are told, “ *Ben* says so.” He certainly has not said so in his works, and therefore the letter-writer must mean, that it is asserted in the pamphlet from which he pretended to quote, that Ben had said so. But Ben could not possibly have said so, even if he had written this epigram at the time to which it has been falsely ascribed; for this plain reason, that *The Ladies' Trial* was not produced till several years afterwards. It was first printed in 1639, two years after Ben Jonson's death, and does not appear to have been licensed by Sir Henry Herbert before that

* “ I here offer to your lordship the *ripest* of my studies, my epigrammes, which, though they carry danger in the sound, do not therefore seek your shelter. For *when I made them*, I had nothing in my conscience to expressing of which I did need a cypher. But if I be false into *those times*, wherein, for the likeness of vice,” &c.

time*. The origin of this note, by which *confusion is worse confounded*, was probably this: Langbaine, under the article, *Fletcher*, mentions that a scene in his *Love's Pilgrimage* was *stollen* from the very play of which we have been speaking; Jonson's *New Inn*. This scene Fletcher himself could not have *stollen* from *The New Inn*, for he was dead some years before that play appeared; but Shirley, who had the revisal of some of those pieces which were left imperfect by Fletcher, (as appears from Sir Henry Herbert's Office-book †,) finding *The New Inn* unsuccessful, took the liberty to borrow a scene from it, which he inserted in *Love's Pilgrimage*, when that play was revived, or as Sir Henry Herbert calls it, *renewed*, in 1635 ‡. Mr. M. had probably some imperfect recollection

* One of the leaves of Sir Henry Herbert's Manuscript, which was missing, having been recovered since the remark in the text was made, I find that the *Ladies Trial* was performed for the first time at the Cockpit theatre in May, 1638, on the 3d of which month it was licensed by the Master of the Revels.

† In Sir Henry Herbert's Office-book is the following entry: "For a play of Fletcher's, *corrected by Shirley*, called *The Night Walkers*, the 11th of May, 1633,—£.2 0 0.

‡ "Received of Blagrove from the King's Company, for the *renewing* of *Love's Pilgrimage*, the 16th of September, 1635,—£.1 0 0." *Ibidem*.

The addition of a new scene, and sometimes an entire act, to an old play, appears from the following entries in the same book to have been common:

"For the adding of a scene to *The Virgin Martyr*, this 7th July, 1624,—£.0 10 0."

"For allowing of a new act in an ould play, this 13th May, 1629,—£.0 10 0."

"For allowing of an ould play, new written or forbisht by Mr. Biston, the 12th of January, 1631,—£.1 0 0."

"An ould play, with some new scenes, *Doctor Lambe* and the *Witches*, to *Salisbury Courte*, the 16th August, 1634,—£.1 0 0.

"Received of ould Cartwright for allowing the [*Fortune*] company to add scenes to an ould play, and to give it out for a new one, this 12th of May, 1636,—£.1 0 0."

This practice prevailed in Shakspeare's time. "The players," says Lupton, in his *London and the Country carbonadoed and quartered*, 8vo. 1602, "are as crafty with an old play as bauds

of what he had read in Langbaine, and found it convenient to substitute Ford's play for that of Fletcher.

We are next told, that this pamphlet asserts that Ben Jonson had given out that *The Lover's Melancholy* was not written by Ford, but purloined from Shakspeare's papers, of which Ford, in conjunction with Heminge and Condell, is said to have had the revisal, when the first folio edition of our poet's works was published in 1623.

It should not be forgotten, that the writer of this letter had asserted in a former letter, that it appears from *several of Ford's Sonnets and Verses* that he lived in the strictest intimacy with Shakspeare to the time of his death: and I may confidently add, that there is not the smallest ground for the assertion, no such sonnets or verses being extant. We need not therefore, hesitate to pronounce the present assertion to be equally unfounded as the former.

After what has been already stated, it would be an idle waste of time to enter into any long disquisition on this fiction. It was evidently thrown out to excite the expectation of the town with respect to the piece itself on the night of performance. The old plays of the minor poets of the last age being in 1748 little known or attended to, those who were curious could not easily satisfy themselves concerning the merit or demerit of *The Lover's Melancholy* by *reading* it, (it not being republished in Dodsley's Collection,) and therefore would naturally resort to the theatre to examine whether there was any ground for such an assertion: the precise end which the letter-writer had in view. When he talked of Shakspeare's *papers*, he was probably thinking of what Heminge and Condell have said in their preface,—“we have scarce received from him a blot in *his papers*.” But by *his papers* they meant nothing more than the old copies of his plays which had lain long in their house, from which they printed part of their edition. Whatever other papers our poet left, without doubt devolved to his family at Stratford.

with old faces: the one puts on a new fresh colour, the other a new face and name.”

If the Office-books of Edmund Tilney, Esq. and Sir George Buck, who were Masters of the Revels during the greater part of the reign of King James the First shall ever be discovered, I have no doubt that the *Vision, Masque, and Prophecy*, in the fifth Act of *Cymbeline*, will be found to have been interpolated by the Players after our poet's death.

The four encomiastick lines signed "Thomas May," and the elegant verses ascribed to Endymion Porter, now remain alone to be considered.

Endymion Porter, whom Sir William D'Avenant, Shakspeare's supposed son, calls "lord of his muse and heart," being mentioned by Mr. Rowe in his *Life of Shakspeare*, as a great admirer of our poet, his name naturally presented itself to the writer of this letter, as a proper one to be subscribed to an eulogy on him and Ford; and he found, or might have found, in Langbaine's *Account of the Dramatick Poets*, that May lived in the strictest intimacy with Endymion Porter, to whom he has dedicated his *Antigone*, published in 1631; a play which probably, when this letter was written, was in Mr. Macklin's possession. Thomas Randolph and Thomas Carew having each of them written verses to Jonson after the publication of the celebrated ode annexed to his unfortunate *New Inn*, requesting him not to leave the stage, as the letter-writer might also have learned from Langbaine, who has given Randolph's Ode at length, he naturally would read over their lines; and Randolph having written "A gratulatory Poem to Ben Jonson for his adopting of him to be his Son," in which we find the following hyperbolical couplet,

"But if heaven take thee, envying us thy lyre,
" 'Tis to pen anthems for an angel's quire ;"

he is not improperly styled by the letter-writer, "Jonson's *Zany* *."

The four lines to which May's name is affixed, are inscribed, "To my worthy friend John Ford;" and it is observable that a copy of verses written by William Singleton, and prefixed to *The Lover's Melancholy*, are also inscribed, "To my worthy friend, the author, Master John

* Randolph's attachment to Ben Jonson was also noticed in the letter printed in the preceding month, in *The General Advertiser*, (the *Theatrical Gazette* of that time,) by way of prelude to Mr. Ryan's benefit. "He was, (says the writer,) a man of pregnant wit, gay humour, and of excellent learning; which gained him the esteem of the town, and *particularly recommended him to Ben Jonson*, who adopted him *one of his sons*, and held him in equal esteem with the ingenious Mr. Cartwright, another of the laureat's sons."

Ford." But why, we shall be told, might not May, as well as Mr. Singleton, address Ford as his *worthy friend*? Be it so then; but unluckily, May, precisely when he is supposed to have made this panegyrick upon Ford, and to have informed the publick, that, even supposing The Lover's Melancholy was from Shakspeare's

" ———— *treasury* reft,

" That *plunderer* Ben ne'er made so *rich a theft*;"

unluckily, I say, at this very time, May was living in the strictest friendship with Jonson; for to May's translation of Lucan, published in 1630, is prefixed a commendatory poem by Jonson,—addressed "To his *chosen friend*, the learned translator of Lucan, Thomas May, Esquire," and subscribed, "*Your true friend in judgment and choise*, Benjamin Jonson."

The verses subscribed, Thomas May, are as follows :

" 'Tis said, from Shakspeare's *mine* your play you drew;

" What need, when Shakspeare still survives in you?

" But grant it were from his *vast treasury* reft,

" That *plunderer* Ben ne'er made so *rich a theft* *."

I have already observed, that, Randolph having written a reply to Jonson's ode, the writer of this letter would naturally look into his works. In a poem addressed to Ben Jonson, speaking of the works of Aristotle, (the writer by the way, to whom that sentence of Greek which is found in the title-page of the present edition was originally applied,) he has these lines :

" ———— I could sit

" Under a willow covert, and repeat

" Those deep and learned lays, on every part

" Grounded in judgment, subtilty, and art,

" That the great tutor to the greatest king,

" The shepherd of Stagira used to sing;

" The shepherd of Stagira, *that unfolds*

" *All nature's closet*, shews what e'er it holds,

" The matter, form, sense, motion, place, and measure,

" Of every thing contain'd in her *vast treasure*."

As Shakspeare's "*vast treasury*" may have been bor-

* *That plunderer Ben ne'er made so rich a theft.*] This thought appears to have been adopted from the words in which Virgil is said to have replied to one who charged him with borrowing from Homer: "Cur non illi quoque eadem furta tentarunt?" Could the illiterate Macklin, therefore, be suspected as author of the verses imputed to him by Mr. Malone? STEEVENS.

rowed from this writer, so the "*rich thefts* of that *plunderer Ben*" might have been suggested to Mr. M. by the following lines addressed by Thomas Carew "to Ben Jonson, upon occasion of his ode of defiance annext to his play of the New Inn:"

" Let them the dear expence of oil upbraid,
 " Suck'd by thy watchful lamp, that hath betray'd
 " To *theft* the blood of martyr'd authors, spilt
 " Into thy ink, whilst thou grow'st pale with guilt.
 " Repine not at the taper's thrifty waste,
 " That sleeks thy terser poems ; nor is haste
 " Praise, but excuse ; and if thou overcome
 " A knotty writer, bring the *booty* home ;
 " Nor think it *theft*, if the *rich* spoils so torn
 " From conquer'd authors, be as trophies worn."

I have traced the marked expressions in this tetrastick to Randolph and Carew ; they might, however, have been suggested by a book still more likely to have been consulted by the writer of it, Langbaine's Account of the Dramatick Poets ; and particularly by that part of his work in which he speaks of Ben Jonson's literary *thefts*, on which I have this moment happened to cast my eye.

" To come lastly to Ben Jonson, who, as Mr. Dryden affirms, has borrowed more from the ancients than any ; I crave leave to say in his behalf, that our late laureat has far out-done him in *thefts*.—When Mr. Jonson borrowed, 'twas from the *treasury* of the Ancients, which is so far from any diminution of his worth, that I think it is to his honour, at least-wise I am sure he is justified by his son Cartwright, in the following lines :

' What though thy searching Muse did rake the dust
 ' Oft time, and purge old metals from their rust ?
 ' Is it no labour, no art, think they, to
 ' Snatch shipwrecks from the deep, as divers do ;
 ' And rescue jewels from the covetous sand,
 ' Making the seas hid *wealth* adorn the land ?
 ' What though thy culling Muse did *rob* the store
 ' Of Greek and Latin gardens, to bring o'er
 ' Plants to thy native soil ? their virtues were
 ' Improv'd far more by being planted here.—
 ' *Thefts* thus become just works ; they and their grace
 ' Are wholly thine : thus doth the stamp and face
 ' Make that the king's that's ravish'd from the *mine* ;
 ' In others then 'tis ore, in thee, 'tis coin.'

" On the contrary, though Mr. Dryden has likewise

borrowed from the Greek and Latin poets,—which I purposely omit to tax him with, as thinking what he has taken to be lawful prize, yet I can not but observe withal, that he has *plunder'd* the chief Italian, Spanish, and French wits for forage, notwithstanding his pretended contempt of them; and not only so, but even his own countrymen have been forced to pay him tribute, or to say better, have not been exempt from being *pillaged**.”

Here we have at once—the *mine*, the *treasury*, the *plunderer*, and the *rich thefts*, of this modern-antique composition†.

* Account of the Dramatick Poets, 8vo, 1691, pp. 145, 148, 149.

† Mr. Macklin tells us, that the pamphlet from which he pretends to quote, mentions, that among other depreciating language Jonson had said of Shakspeare, that “the man had imagination and *wit* none could deny, but that they were ever guided by true judgment in the *rules* and conduct of a piece, none could with justice assert, both being ever servile to *raise the laughter of fools* and the *wonder of the ignorant*.”

“Being guided by judgment in the conduct of a piece,” is perfectly intelligible; but what are we to understand by *being guided by judgment in the rules of a piece*? However, every part of this sentence also may be traced to its source. Mr. Pope has said in his preface, that “not only the common audience had no notion of the *rules* of writing, but few of the better sort piqued themselves upon any great degree of knowledge or nicety that way, till Ben Jonson getting possession of the stage, brought critical learning into vogue:” and Jonson himself, in his Discoveries, speaking of Shakspeare, says, “his *wit* was in his power, would the *rule* of it had been so.”

In Mr. Pope's Preface we are told, that “in tragedy nothing was so sure to *surprise*, and create *admiration*, as the most strange, improbable, and consequently most unnatural, incidents and events.—In comedy, nothing was so sure to please, as mean buffoonery, vile ribaldry, and unmannerly jests of *fools* and *clowns*.”

Prefixed to Randolph's Works is a panegyrick written by Mr. Richard West, from whose poem two lines are quoted by Langbaine, which were also inserted in The General Advertiser of the 5th of March, 1748, in the encomium on Randolph's plays.

In Mr. West's Verses, speaking of ordinary dramatick poets, he says,—

“For humours to lie lieger, they are seen

“Oft in a tavern or a bowling-green.

The last copy of verses, ascribed to Endymion Porter, are uncommonly elegant, and perhaps one of the best invented fictions that can be pointed out.—“These *letter-tyrant elves*” is much in the manner of the time, as is “*their pedant selves*,” in a subsequent line. But how difficult is it to assume the manner or language of a former age, without occasionally lapsing into those of the present! The phrases, “*upon the whole*,” and “*from college*,—

“Indeed, says Tom, *upon the whole*, &c.

“But Ben and Tom *from college*—”

have a very modern sound, and are not, I believe, used by any of our old English writers.—I must also observe that Mr. M. found his *after-times* in the old panegyrick on Ford, which he inserted in his first letter, and *Avon’s swan* in Ben Jonson’s Verses on Shakspeare, prefixed to all the editions of his plays; and that the extravagant and unfounded praise here given to Ford, who, like our great poet, is said to have been *sent from heaven*, and the insinuation that the Lover’s Melancholy was “*Shakspeare’s every word*,” were evidently calculated for the temporary purpose of aiding a benefit, and putting money into the purse of the writer.

While, however, we transfer these elegant lines from

“They do observe each place and company,

“As strictly as a traveller or spy:—

“And sit with patience an hour by the heels,

“To learn the nonsense of the constables;

“*Such jig-like flim-flams being got, to make*

“*The rabble laugh, and nut-cracking forsake.*”

Randolph is then described, and among other high praises, we are told,—

“There’s none need fear to surfeit with his phrase;

“He has no giant raptures, to amaze

“And torture *weak capacities with wonder.*”

We have already seen that Mr. Macklin had been just perusing Ben Jonson’s Epigrams. In his second Epigram, which is addressed to his book, are these lines:

“— by thy wiser temper let men know,

“Thou art not covetous of least self-fame,

“Made from the hazard of another’s shame:

“Much less, with lewd, prophane, and beastly phrase,

“*To catch the world’s loose laughter, or vaine gaze.*”

Endymion Porter to Mr. Macklin, let us not forget that they exhibit no common specimen of an easy versification and a good taste, and that they add a new wreath to the poetical crown of this veteran comedian.

I have only to add, that John Ford and Thomas May were so far from being at variance with Old Ben, that in *Jonsonius Virbius*, a collection of poems on the death of Ben Jonson, published in 1638, about six months after his death, there is an encomiastick poem by John Ford; and in this volume is also found a panegyrick by Ford's friend, George Donne, and another by Thomas May, who styles Ben "the best of our English poets." On this, however, I lay no great stress, because the same collection exhibits a poem by Jonson's old antagonist, Owen Feltham: but if, after all that has been stated, the smallest doubt could remain concerning the subject of our present disquisition, I might observe, that Ford appears not only to have lived on amicable terms with Ben Jonson himself, (at least we have no proof to the contrary,) but with his servant, Richard Brome; to whose play entitled *The Northern Lass*, which was acted by the King's Company on the 29th of July, 1629, the very year of the publication of *The Lover's Melancholy*, and of the first exhibition of *The New Inn*, is prefixed an high panegyrick by "the author's *very friend*, John Ford."

Let the present detection be a lesson to mankind in matters of greater moment, and teach those whom higher considerations do not deter from invading the rights or property of others by any kind of fiction, to abstain from such an attempt, from the *inefficacy* and *folly* of it; for the most plausible and best fabricated tale, if properly examined, will crumble to pieces, like "the labour'd mole," loosened from its foundation by the continued force of the ocean; while simple and honest truth, firm and self-dependant, will ever maintain its ground against all assailants,—

"As rocks resist the billows and the sky."

MALONE.

“ And flies the javelin swifter to its mark,
 “ Launch’d from the vigour of a Roman arm * ? ”

If so, in compliance with example, and supposing Mr. Malone’s motto to point at Mr. Macklin, I shall venture a reply in his name, and from Virgil too :—

Stat gravis Entellus, nisuque immotus eodem.

Though the Letter which gave rise to the preceding strictures (as Dr. Farmer long ago remarked) may not be entitled to implicit confidence, I am unwilling to regard this publication as a confirmed forgery by Mr. Macklin. In my opinion, he could as readily have supplied a deficient chorus in a Greek tragedy, as the poem ascribed to Endymion Porter. A vein of broad humour, and a rugged force of style, distinguish the performances of our truly respectable dramatick veteran; but where, among all his numerous works, shall we find such ease and elegance as decorate the stanzas in commendation of Ford ?

It would be difficult to account for Mr. Macklin’s conception of the species of fraud so strenuously imputed to him. Unacquainted with ancient and licensed polemick weapons, he would scarce have invented new and unfair ones. Before the year 1748 no successful impositions, whether grave or ludicrous, had led the way to such an attempt. No Lauder, by a kindred process, had questioned the originality of Milton; no Rowleian epicks, Hardicnutian tablets†, or Shakspearian forgeries, had been applied as touchstones to antiquarian sagacity. If Mr. Macklin was really the fabricator of these disputed authorities, he must be considered as the parent of literary impostures in England. He must have planned his work without the advantage of a model; and, respecting the poetry of Endymion Porter, must be allowed to have executed a task of elegance, without ostensible requisites for his undertaking.—When I communicated these stanzas to Dr. Johnson, he read them with indications of pleasure, and instantly exclaimed—“ The lines, sir, are evidently

* Addison’s Cato.

† See the Gentleman’s and European Magazine for March and April, 1790.

the product of a man of fashion *. Were our friend Beauclerk† engaged to furnish a poetick trifle, he would write just such verses as these."

That no pamphlet, however, with the title already mentioned by Mr. Malone, has ever appeared, is too much to be granted without some degree of hesitation. Must no ancient satirical and poetical pieces be allowed to exist, except such as he and I have unkennelled by industry or advertisement? Till the earliest Taming of a Shrew was met with, Mr. Pope's quotations from it were suspected; for some of the lines, as printed by him, displayed more than a single deviation from the established phraseology of their age; and yet, on the whole, we are bound to acknowledge the genuineness of his extracts from the rude original of Shakspeare's comedy.

The rarity of particular books as well as pamphlets, has been occasioned by obvious circumstances. Sometimes a fire has almost destroyed an unpublished work. At other times, a threat has suppressed an invective, or a bribe has stifled an accusation. It were no task of difficulty to enumerate tracts, of each of which but a single copy has been discovered.

I readily allow, and in their utmost extent, such departures from the acknowledged truth of dramattick history, as are pointed out by Mr. Malone with his accustomed accuracy and precision. But he has not proved ‡

* Such undoubtedly was the character of Endymion Porter, who was a Gentleman of his Majesty's Bedchamber.

† The late Honourable Topham Beauclerk.

‡ I know not from what cause it has arisen, but I think I have observed a more than common degree of inaccuracy in facts and dates relative to the stage, as often as they become objects for the memory to exercise itself upon. No conclusive arguments, I am sure, can be drawn from the falsehoods or mistakes in the piece under consideration, to prove the non-existence of it. Immediately on the death of Mr. Quin in 1766, a pamphlet was published professing to be an account of his Life, in which the fact of his having killed a brother actor was related; but so related, that no one circumstance belonging to it could be depended on, except that a man was killed. Neither the time when the accident happened, the place where, the cause of the quarrel, the progress of it, or even the name or identity of the person, were stated agreeable to truth; and all these fables were imposed on the publick at a time when many people were living,

that those very defects might not have originated from the pamphlet supposed to have furnished Mr. Macklin with materials for his letter. Does it follow that the pamphleteer himself must have been qualified for his task? Might he not rather have been some inaccurate hireling, who tacked together, for purposes now unknown, the disjointed and fallacious scraps of literary intelligence which every theatre usually supplies?

Let us likewise inquire, whether such extracts from an antiquated pamphlet as are hastily made by a person unskilled in argument and composition, may not exhibit blunders and contradictions which had no place in the work from whence his *notitiæ* were derived. By injudicious retrenchments, therefore, of the intelligence Mr. Macklin adopted, and a heterogeneous mixture of his own conceptions, he may have perplexed his narrative so effectually, that, without reference to his original document, the truths in question must escape the reach of human inquiry:

“ ————— the dram of base

“ Doth all the noble substance often dout.”

In justice to Mr. Macklin and myself, I must add, that in 1777, when he first related the history of his lost pamphlet, he subjoined the following remarkable circumstance, which could not well have been invented on a sudden for the purposes of deceit.—“The want of this publication (says he) I do not so much lament, as the loss of a speech on the Habeas Corpus by Sir J. Elliot, which, (with several other tracts printed about the same time,) was in the same quarto volume.”—Every collector of fugitive publications must know how usual it is for coeval articles, however miscellaneous, to be bound together. This circumstance, in my judgment, adds no small probability to the narrative in which Mr. Macklin still persists; for the speech to which he alluded must have been published in or about the very year that produced “Old Ben’s Light

who could have contradicted them from their own personal knowledge. To apply this to the present case: suppose at the distance of more than a century, one single copy only of this *Life* (no improbable supposition) should remain, and after being quoted should be lost; the facts which it contains might be demonstrated to be untrue, but the non-existence of the work referred to, surely would not thereby be established. REED.

Heart," &c. provided a pamphlet bearing that title was ever issued from the press.

It has been by no means my desire to controvert the sentiments of Mr. Malone, any further than was needful toward my own apology as the first republisher of Mr. Macklin's production. Mr. Malone's ingenuity in support of his position, demands an acknowledgment which is cheerfully bestowed: and yet, considering the labour he has expended on so slight a subject, I cannot help comparing him to one who brings a sledge hammer for the demolition of a house of cards. STEEVENS*.

* It is rather whimsical that Mr. Steevens should have been of opinion that Mr. Malone had bestowed disproportionate labour on so slight a subject, and should yet refuse his assent to the arguments which he has produced. Mr. Reed's argument is not less extraordinary. Such it seems is the inaccuracy which, for some reason or another, is inseparable from every thing which relates to the history of the stage, which he contents himself with proving by one instance, that no mistakes or falsehoods in a narrative of that nature can be sufficient for its detection. It follows, that forgery, in all such cases, must have an unlimited privilege. Mr. Malone has been censured upon another ground; for the mild terms in which he has spoken of this fabrication. It is true that strict justice might have admitted, and perhaps demanded, a stronger sentence: but I cannot regret that my benevolent friend, while he has very intelligibly pointed out, in the close of his Essay, how far he was aware of the folly and criminality of falsehood, should have suffered himself to spare the grey hairs of the venerable Macklin.

BOSWELL.

SOME ACCOUNT
OF THE
L I F E
OF
WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE.

WRITTEN BY MR. ROWE.

IT seems to be a kind of respect due to the memory of excellent men, especially of those whom their wit and learning have made famous, to deliver some account of themselves, as well as their works, to posterity. For this reason, how fond do we see some people of discovering any little personal story of the great men of antiquity! their families, the common accidents of their lives, and even their shape, make, and features, have been the subject of critical inquiries. How trifling soever this curiosity may seem to be, it is certainly very natural; and we are hardly satisfied with an account of any remarkable person, till we have heard him described even to the very clothes he wears. As for what relates to men of letters, the knowledge of an author may sometimes conduce to the better understanding his book; and though the works of Mr. Shakspeare may seem to many not to want a comment, yet I fancy some little account of the man himself may not be thought improper to go along with them.

He was the son of Mr. John Shakspeare, and was born at Stratford-upon-Avon, in Warwickshire, in April, 1564. His family, as appears by the register and publick writings relating to that town, were of good figure and fashion there,

and are mentioned as gentlemen. His father, who was a considerable dealer in wool*, had so large a family, ten children in all, that though he was his eldest son, he could give him no better education than his own employment. He had bred him, it is true, for some time at a free-school†, where, it is probable, he acquired what Latin he was master of: but the narrowness of his circumstances, and the want of his assistance at home, forced his father to withdraw him from thence, and unhappily prevented his further proficiency in that language. It is without controversy, that in his works we scarce find any traces of any thing that looks like an imitation of the ancients. The delicacy of his taste, and the natural bent of his own great genius, (equal, if not superior, to some of the best of theirs,) would certainly have led him to read and study them with so much pleasure, that some of their fine images would naturally have insinuated themselves into, and been mixed with his own writings: so that his not copying at least something from them, may be an argument of his never having read them. Whether his ignorance of the ancients were a disadvantage to him or no, may admit of a dispute: for though the knowledge of them might have made him more correct, yet it is not improbable but that the regularity and deference for them, which would have attended that correctness, might have restrained some of that fire, impetuosity, and even beautiful extravagance, which we admire in Shakspeare: and I believe we are better pleased with those thoughts, altogether new and uncommon, which his own imagination supplied him so abundantly with, than if he had given us the most beautiful passages out of the Greek and Latin poets, and that in the most agreeable manner that it was possible for a master of the English language to deliver them.

Upon his leaving school, he seems to have given entirely into that way of living which his father proposed to

* His father, who was a considerable dealer in wool,] It appears that he had been an officer and bailiff of Stratford-upon-Avon; and that he enjoyed some hereditary lands and tenements, the reward of his grandfather's faithful and approved services to King Henry VII. See the extract from the Herald's Office.

THEOBALD.

† He had bred him, it is true, for some time at a free-school,] The free-school, I presume, founded at Stratford. THEOBALD.

him; and in order to settle in the world after a family manner, he thought fit to marry while he was yet very young*. His wife was the daughter of one Hathaway†, said to have been a substantial yeoman in the neighbourhood of Stratford. In this kind of settlement he continued for some time, till an extravagance that he was guilty of forced him both out of his country, and that way of living which he had taken up; and though it seemed at first to be a blemish upon his good manners, and a misfortune to him, yet it afterwards happily proved the occasion of exerting one of the greatest *geniuses*, that ever was known in dramatick poetry. He had by a misfortune, common enough to young fellows, fallen into ill company, and amongst them, some that made a frequent practice of deer-stealing, engaged him more than once in robbing a park that belonged to Sir Thomas Lucy, of Charlecote, near Stratford. For this he was prosecuted by that gentleman, as he thought, somewhat too severely; and in order to revenge that ill usage, he made a ballad upon him. And though this, probably the first essay of his poetry, be lost, yet it is said to have been so very bitter, that it redoubled the prosecution against him to that degree, that he was obliged to leave his business and family in Warwickshire, for some time, and shelter himself in London.

* — he thought fit to marry while he was yet very young.] It is certain he did so; for by the monument in Stratford church, erected to the memory of his daughter, Susanna, the wife of John Hall, gentleman, it appears, that she died on the 2d of July, 1649, aged 66; so that she was born in 1583, when her father could not be full 19 years old. THEOBALD.

Susanna, who was our poet's eldest child, was baptized, May 26, 1583. Shakspeare therefore, having been born in April 1564, was nineteen the month preceding her birth. Mr. Theobald was mistaken in supposing that a *monument* was erected to her in the church of Stratford. There is no memorial there in honour of either our poet's wife or daughter, except flat tombstones, by which, however, the time of their respective deaths is ascertained.—His daughter, Susanna, died, not on the *second*, but the *eleventh* of July, 1649. Theobald was led into this error by Dugdale. MALONE.

† His wife was the daughter of one Hathaway,] She was eight years older than her husband, and died in 1623, at the age of 67 years. THEOBALD.

It is at this time, and upon this accident, that he is said to have made his first acquaintance in the playhouse. He was received into the company then in being, at first in a very mean rank, but his admirable wit, and the natural turn of it to the stage, soon distinguished him, if not as an extraordinary actor, yet as an excellent writer. His name is printed, as the custom was in those times, amongst those of the other players, before some old plays, but without any particular account of what sort of parts he used to play; and though I have inquired, I could never meet with any further account of him this way, than that the top of his performance was the Ghost in his own Hamlet. I should have been much more pleased, to have learned from certain authority, which was the first play he wrote*; it would be without doubt a pleasure to any man, curious in things of this kind, to see and know what was the first essay of a fancy like Shakspeare's. Perhaps we are not to look for his beginnings, like those of other authors, among their least perfect writings; art had so little, and nature so large a share in what he did, that, for aught I know, the performances of his youth, as they were the most vigorous, and had the most fire and strength of imagination in them, were the best†. I would not be thought by this to mean, that his fancy was so loose and extravagant, as to be independent on the rule and government of judgment; but that what he thought was commonly so great, so justly and rightly conceived in itself, that it wanted little or no correction, and was immediately approved by an impartial judgment at the first sight. But though the order of time in which the several pieces were written be generally uncertain, yet there are passages in

* — to have learned from certain authority, which was the first play he wrote;] The highest date of any I can yet find, is *Romeo and Juliet* in 1597, when the author was 33 years old; and *Richard the Second*, and *Third*, in the next year, viz. the 34th of his age. POPE.

Richard II. and *III.* were both printed in 1597.—On the order of time in which Shakspeare's plays were written, see the Essay in the next volume. MALONE.

† — for aught I know, the performances of his youth—were the best.] See this notion controverted in the above-mentioned Essay. MALONE.

some few of them which seem to fix their dates. So the Chorus at the end of the fourth act of Henry the Fifth, by a compliment very handsomely turned to the Earl of Essex, shows the play to have been written when that lord was general for the Queen in Ireland; and his elogy upon Queen Elizabeth, and her successor King James, in the latter end of his Henry the Eighth, is a proof of that play's being written after the accession of the latter of these two princes to the crown of England. Whatever the particular times of his writing were, the people of his age, who began to grow wonderfully fond of diversions of this kind, could not but be highly pleased to see a genius arise amongst them of so pleasurable, so rich a vein, and so plentifully capable of furnishing their favourite entertainments. Besides the advantages of his wit, he was in himself a good-natured man, of great sweetness in his manners, and a most agreeable companion; so that it is no wonder, if, with so many good qualities, he made himself acquainted with the best conversations of those times. Queen Elizabeth had several of his plays acted before her, and without doubt gave him many gracious marks of her favour: it is that maiden princess plainly, whom he intends by

“ — a fair vestal, throned by the west.”

A Midsummer-Night's Dream.

And that whole passage is a compliment very properly brought in, and very handsomely applied to her. She was so well pleased with that admirable character of Falstaff, in The Two Parts of Henry the Fourth, that she commanded him to continue it for one play more, and to show him in love. This is said to be the occasion of his writing The Merry Wives of Windsor. How well she was obeyed, the play itself is an admirable proof. Upon this occasion it may not be improper to observe, that this part of Falstaff is said to have been written originally under the name of Oldcastle*: some of that family being then remaining, the Queen was pleased to command him to alter it; upon which he made use of Falstaff. The present

* — this part of Falstaff is said to have been written originally under the name of Oldcastle;] See the Epilogue to Henry the Fourth. POPE.

See in this edition, vol. xvi. p. 410. BOSWELL.

offence was indeed avoided ; but I do not know whether the author may not have been somewhat to blame in his second choice, since it is certain that Sir John Falstaff, who was a knight of the garter, and a lieutenant-general, was a name of distinguished merit in the wars in France in Henry the Fifth's and Henry the Sixth's times. What grace soever the Queen conferred upon him, it was not to her only he owed the fortune which the reputation of his wit made. He had the honour to meet with many great and uncommon marks of favour and friendship from the Earl of Southampton, famous in the histories of that time for his friendship to the unfortunate Earl of Essex. It was to that noble lord that he dedicated his poem of Venus and Adonis. There is one instance so singular in the magnificence of this patron of Shakspeare's, that if I had not been assured that the story was handed down by Sir William D'Avenant, who was probably very well acquainted with his affairs, I should not have ventured to have inserted ; that my Lord Southampton at one time gave him a thousand pounds, to enable him to go through with a purchase which he heard he had a mind to. A bounty very great, and very rare at any time, and almost equal to that profuse generosity the present age has shown to French dancers and Italian singers.

What particular habitude or friendships he contracted with private men, I have not been able to learn, more than that every one, who had a true taste of merit, and could distinguish men, had generally a just value and esteem for him. His exceeding candour and good-nature must certainly have inclined all the gentler part of the world to love him, as the power of his wit obliged the men of the most delicate knowledge and polite learning to admire him.

His acquaintance with Ben Jonson began with a remarkable piece of humanity and good-nature ; Mr. Jonson, who was at that time altogether unknown to the world, had offered one of his plays to the players, in order to have it acted ; and the persons into whose hands it was put, after having turned it carelessly and superciliously over, were just upon returning it to him with an ill-natured answer, that it would be of no service to their company ; when Shakspeare luckily cast his eye upon it, and found something so well in it, as to engage him first to read it through, and afterwards to recommend Mr.

Jonson and his writings to the publick*. Jonson was certainly a very good scholar, and in that had the advan-

* ——— to recommend Mr. Jonson and his writings to the publick.] In Mr. Rowe's first edition, after these words was inserted the following passage:

"After this, they were professed friends: though I do not know whether the other ever made him an equal return of gentleness and sincerity. Ben was naturally proud and insolent, and in the days of his reputation did so far take upon him the supremacy in wit, that he could not but look with an evil eye upon any one that seemed to stand in competition with him. And if at times he has affected to commend him, it has always been with some reserve; insinuating his uncorrectness, a careless manner of writing, and want of judgment. The praise of seldom altering or blotting out what he writ, which was given him by the players, who were the first publishers of his works after his death, was what Jonson could not bear: he thought it impossible, perhaps, for another man to strike out the greatest thoughts in the finest expression, and to reach those excellencies of poetry with the ease of a first imagination, which himself with infinite labour and study could but hardly attain to."

I have preserved this passage because I believe it strictly true, except that in the last line, instead of *but hardly* I would read —*never*.

Dryden, we are told by Pope, concurred with Mr. Rowe in thinking Jonson's posthumous verses on our author *sparing* and *invidious*.

Before Shakspeare's death Ben's envious disposition is mentioned by one of his own friends; it must therefore have been even then notorious, though the writer denies the truth of the charge:

"To my well accomplished friend, Mr. Ben Jonson.

"Thou art sound in body; but some say, thy soule

"*Envy doth ulcer*; yet corrupted hearts

"Such censurers must have."

Scourge of Folly, by J. Davies, printed about 1611.

The following lines by one of Jonson's admirers will sufficiently support Mr. Rowe in what he has said relative to the slowness of that writer in his compositions:

"Scorn then their censures who gave out, thy wit

"As long upon a comedy did sit

"As elephants bring forth, and that thy blots

"And mendings took more time than *Fortune-Plots*;

tage of Shakspeare; though at the same time I believe it must be allowed, that what nature gave the latter, was

“ That such thy drought was, and so great thy thirst,
 “ That all thy plays were drawn at the Mermaid first;
 “ That the king's yearly butt wrote, and his wine
 “ Hath more right than thou to thy Catiline.”

The writer does not deny the charge, but vindicates his friend by saying that, however slow,—

“ He that writes well, writes quick—.”

Verses on B. Jonson, by Jasper Mayne.

So also, another of his Panegyrists:

“ Admit his muse was slow, 'tis judgment's fate
 “ To move like greatest princes, still in state.”

In *The Return from Parnassus*, 1606, Jonson is said to be “so *slow an enduer*, that he were better betake himself to his old trade of bricklaying.” The same piece furnishes us with the earliest intimation of the quarrel between him and Shakspeare: “Why here's our fellow Shakspeare put them [the university poets] all down, ay, and Ben Jonson too. O, that Ben Jonson is a pestilent fellow; he brought up Horace giving the poets a pill, but our fellow Shakspeare hath given him a purge that made him bewray his credit.” Fuller, who was a diligent enquirer, and lived near enough the time to be well informed, confirms this account, asserting in his *Worthies*, 1662, that “many were the wit-combats” between Jonson and our poet.

It is a singular circumstance that old Ben should for near two centuries have stalked on the stilts of an artificial reputation; and that even at this day, of the very few who read his works, scarcely one in ten yet ventures to confess how little entertainment they afford. Such was the impression made on the publick by the extravagant praises of those who knew more of books than of the drama, that Dryden in his *Essay on Dramatick Poesie*, written about 1667, does not venture to go further in his eulogium on Shakspeare, than by saying, “he was at least *Jonson's equal*, if not his superior;” and in the preface to his *Mock Astrologer*, 1671, he hardly dares to assert, what, in my opinion, cannot be denied, that “all Jonson's pieces, except three or four, are but *crambe bis cocta*; the same humours a little varied, and written worse.”

Ben, however, did not trust to the praise of others. One of his admirers candidly confesses,—

“ ————— he
 “ Of whom I write this, has prevented me,
 “ And boldly said so much in his own praise,
 “ No other pen need any trophy raise.”

more than a balance for what books had given the former ; and the judgment of a great man upon this occasion was,

In vain, however, did he endeavour to bully the town into approbation by telling his auditors, " By G— 'tis good, and if you like't, you may ;" and by pouring out against those who preferred our poet to him, a torrent of illiberal abuse ; which, as Mr. Walpole justly observes, some of his contemporaries were willing to think wit, because they were afraid of it ; for, notwithstanding all his arrogant boasts, notwithstanding all the clamour of his partizans both in his own life time and for sixty years after his death, the truth is, that his pieces, when first performed, were so far from being applauded by the people, that they were scarcely endured ; and many of them were actually *damned*.

" — The fine plush and velvets of the age

" Did oft for sixpence *damn thee* from the stage,"—

says one of his eulogists in Jonsonius Virbius, 4to. 1638. Jonson himself owns that Sejanus was damned. " It is a poem," says he, in his Dedication to Lord Aubigny, " that, if I well remember, in your Lordship's sight suffered no less violence from our people here, than the subject of it did from the rage of the people of Rome." His friend E. B. (probably Edmund Bolton) speaking of the same performance, says,—

" But when I view'd the people's beastly rage,

" Bent to confound thy grave and learned toil,

" That cost thee so much sweat and so much oil,

" My indignation I could hardly assuage."

Again, in his Dedication of Catiline to the Earl of Pembroke, the author says, " Posterity may pay your benefit the honour and thanks, when it shall know that you dare in these jig-given times to countenance a legitimate poem. I must call it so, *against all noise of opinion*, from whose crude and ayrie reports I appeal to that great and singular facultie of judgment in your lordship."

See also the Epilogue to Every Man in his Humour, by Lord Buckhurst, quoted below in The Account of our old English Theatres, *ad finem*. To his testimony and that of Mr. Drummond of Hawthornden, (there also mentioned,) may be added that of Leonard Digges in his Verses on Shakspeare, and of Sir Robert Howard, who says in the preface to his Plays, folio, 1665, (not thirty years after Ben's death,) " When I consider how severe the former age has been to some of the *best* of Mr. Jonson's never-to-be-equalled comedies, I cannot but wonder, why any poet should speak of former times." The truth is, that however extravagant the elogiums were that a few scholars gave him in

I think, very just and proper. In a conversation between Sir John Suckling, Sir William D'Avenant, Endymion Porter, Mr. Hales of Eton, and Ben Jonson, Sir John Suckling, who was a professed admirer of Shakspeare, had undertaken his defence against Ben Jonson with some warmth; Mr. Hales, who had sat still for some time, told them*, *That if Mr. Shakspeare had not read the ancients, he had likewise not stolen any thing from them; and that if he would produce any one topick finely treated by any one of them, he would undertake to show something upon the same subject at least as well written by Shakspeare*†.

their closets, he was not only not admired in his own time by the generality, but not even understood. His friend Beaumont assures him in a copy of verses, that "his sense is so deep that he will not be understood for three ages to come." MALONE.

* Mr. Hales, who had sat still for some time, told THEM,] In Mr. Rowe's first edition this passage runs thus:

"Mr. Hales, who had sat still for some time, *hearing Ben frequently reproach him with the want of learning and ignorance of the antients*, told him at last, *That if Mr. Shakspeare,*" &c. By the alteration, the subsequent part of the sentence—"if he would produce," &c. is rendered ungrammatical. MALONE.

† — He would undertake to show something upon the same subject at least as well written by Shakspeare.] I had long endeavoured in vain to find out on what authority this relation was founded; and have very lately discovered that Mr. Rowe probably derived his information from Dryden: for in Gildon's Letters and Essays, published in 1694, fifteen years before this Life appeared, the same story is told; and Dryden, to whom an Essay in vindication of Shakspeare is addressed, is appealed to by the writer as his authority. As Gildon tells the story with some slight variations from the account given by Mr. Rowe, and the book in which it is found is now extremely scarce, I shall subjoin the passage in his own words:

"But to give the world some satisfaction that Shakspeare has had as great veneration paid his excellence by men of unquestioned parts, as this I now express for him, I shall give some account of what I have heard *from your mouth*, sir, about the noble triumph he gained over all the ancients, by the judgment of the ablest criticks of that time.

"The matter of fact, if my memory fail me not, was this. Mr. Hales of Eton affirmed, that he would show all the poets of antiquity out-done by Shakspeare, in all the topicks and common-places made use of in poetry. The enemies of Shakspeare would by no means yield him so much excellence; so that it came to

The latter part of his life was spent, as all men of good sense will wish theirs may be, in ease, retirement, and the conversation of his friends. He had the good fortune to gather an estate equal to his occasion, and, in that, to his wish; and is said to have spent some years before his death at his native Stratford. His pleasurable wit and good-nature engaged him in the acquaintance, and entitled

a resolution of a trial of skill upon that subject. The place agreed on for the dispute was Mr. Hales's chamber at Eton. A great many books were sent down by the enemies of this poet; and on the appointed day my Lord Falkland, Sir John Suckling, and all the persons of quality that had wit and learning, and interested themselves in the quarrel, met there; and upon a thorough disquisition of the point, the judges chosen by agreement out of this learned and ingenious assembly, unanimously gave the preference to Shakspeare, and the Greek and Roman Poets were adjudged to vail at least their glory in that to the English Hero."

This elogium on our author is likewise recorded at an earlier period by Tate, probably from the same authority, in the preface to *The Loyal General*, quarto, 1680: "Our learned Hales was wont to assert, that, since the time of Orpheus, and the oldest poets, no common-place has been touched upon, where our author has not performed as well."

Dryden himself also certainly alludes to this story, which he appears to have related both to Gildon and Rowe, in the following passage of his *Essay of Dramatick Poesy*, 1667; and he as well as Gildon goes somewhat further than Rowe, in his panegyrick. After giving that fine character of our poet which Dr. Johnson has quoted in his preface, he adds, "The consideration of this made Mr. Hales of Eton say, *that there was no subject of which any poet ever writ, but he would produce it MUCH BETTER done by Shakspeare*; and however others are now generally preferred before him, yet the age wherein he lived, which had contemporaries with him, Fletcher and Jonson, never equalled them to him in their esteem: And in the last king's court [that of Charles I.] when Ben's reputation was at highest, Sir John Suckling, and with him the greater part of the courtiers, set our Shakspeare far above him."

Let ever-memorable Hales, if all his other merits be forgotten, be ever mentioned with honour, for his good taste and admiration of our poet. "He was," says Lord Clarendon, "one of the least men in the kingdom; and one of the greatest scholars in Europe." See a long character of him in *Clarendon's Life*, vol. i. p. 52. MALONE.

him to the friendship of the gentlemen of the neighbourhood. Amongst them, it is a story almost still remembered in that country that he had a particular intimacy with Mr. Combe*, an old gentleman noted thereabouts for his wealth and usury : it happened, that in a pleasant conversation amongst their common friends, Mr. Combe told Shakspeare in a laughing manner, that he fancied he intended to write his epitaph, if he happened to out-live him ; and since he could not know what might be said of him when he was dead, he desired it might be done immediately ; upon which Shakspeare gave him these four lines :

“ *Ten in the hundred* lies here ingrav'd ;
 “ 'Tis a hundred to ten his soul is not sav'd :
 “ If any man ask, Who lies in this tomb ?
 “ Oh ! oh ! quoth the devil, 'tis my John-a-Combe.”

But the sharpness of the satire is said to have stung the man so severely, that he never forgave it.

He died in the 53d year of his age, and was buried on the north side of the chancel, in the great church at Stratford, where a monument is placed in the wall†. On his grave-stone underneath is,—

* — that he had a particular intimacy with Mr. Combe,] This Mr. John Combe I take to be the same, who, by Dugdale, in his *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, is said to have died in the year 1614, and for whom at the upper end of the quire of the guild of the holy cross at Stratford, a fair monument is erected, having a statue thereon cut in alabaster, and in a gown, with this epitaph : “ Here lyeth interred the body of John Combe, Esq. who departing this life the 10th day of July, 1614, bequeathed by his last will and testament these sums ensuing, annually to be paid for ever ; viz. xx. s. for two sermons to be preach'd in this church, and vi. l. xiii. s. iv. d. to buy ten gownes for ten poore people within the borough of Stratford ; and 100l. to be lent to fifteen poore tradesmen of the same borough, from three years to three years, changing the parties every third year, at the rate of fifty shillings *per annum*, the which increase he appointed to be distributed towards the relief of the almes-poor there.” The donation has all the air of a rich and sagacious usurer. THEOBALD.

† — where a monument is placed in the wall.] He is represented under an arch, in a sitting posture, a cushion spread before him, with a pen in his right hand, and his left rested on a

" Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbear
 " To dig the dust inclosed here.
 " Blest be the man that spares these stones,
 " And curst be he that moves my bones."

He had three daughters, of which two lived to be married; Judith, the elder, to one Mr. Thomas Quiney, by whom she had three sons, who all died without children; and Susanna, who was his favourite, to Dr. John Hall, a physician of good reputation in that country. She left one child only, a daughter, who was married first to Thomas Nashe, Esq. and afterwards to Sir John Barnard of Abington, but died likewise without issue.

This is what I could learn of any note, either relating to himself or family; the character of the man is best seen in his writings. But since Ben Jonson has made a sort of an essay towards it in his Discoveries, I will give it in his words:

scroll of paper. The following Latin distich is engraved under the cushion:

Judicio Pylium, genio Socratem, arte Maronem,
 Terra tegit, populus mæret, Olympus habet.

THEOBALD.

The first syllable in Socratem is here made short, which cannot be allowed. Perhaps we should read *Sophoclem*. Shakspeare is then appositely compared with a dramatick author among the ancients: but still it should be remembered that the elogium is lessened while the metre is reformed; and it is well known that some of our early writers of Latin poetry were uncommonly negligent in their prosody, especially in proper names. The thought of this distich, as Mr. Tollet observes, might have been taken from The Faëry Queene of Spenser, B. II. c. ix. st. 48, and c. x. st. 3.

To this Latin inscription on Shakspeare should be added the lines which are found underneath it on his monument:

" Stay, passenger, why dost thou go so fast?
 " Read, if thou canst, whom envious death hath plac'd
 " Within this monument; Shakspeare, with whom
 " Quick nature dy'd; whose name doth deck the tomb
 " Far more than cost; since all that he hath writ
 " Leaves living art but page to serve his wit.

" Obiit An^o. Dni. 1616.

æt. 53, die 23 Apri." STEEVENS.

" I remember the players have often mentioned it as an
 " honour to Shakspeare, that in writing (whatsoever he
 " penned) he never blotted out a line. My answer hath
 " been, *Would he had blotted a thousand!* which they
 " thought a malevolent speech. I had not told posterity
 " this, but for their ignorance, who chose that circum-
 " stance to commend their friend by, wherein he most
 " faulted: and to justify mine own candour, for I loved
 " the man, and do honour his memory, on this side idola-
 " try, as much as any. He was, indeed, honest, and of
 " an open and free nature, had an excellent fancy, brave
 " notions, and gentle expressions; wherein he flowed with
 " that facility, that sometimes it was necessary he should
 " be stopped: *Sufflaminandus erat*, as Augustus said of
 " Haterius. His wit was in his own power; would the
 " rule of it had been so too. Many times he fell into those
 " things which could not escape laughter; as when he
 " said in the person of Cæsar, one speaking to him,

' Cæsar, thou dost me wrong.'

" He replied:

' Cæsar did never wrong, but with just cause.'

" and such like, which were ridiculous. But he redeemed
 " his vices with his virtues; there was ever more in him
 " to be praised than to be pardoned."

As for the passage which he mentions out of Shak-
 speare, there is somewhat like it in Julius Cæsar, but with-
 out the absurdity; nor did I ever meet with it in any
 edition that I have seen, as quoted by Mr. Jonson*.

Besides his plays in this edition, there are two or three
 ascribed to him by Mr. Langbaine, which I have never
 seen, and know nothing of. He writ likewise Venus and
 Adonis, and Tarquin and Lucrece, in stanzas, which have
 been printed in a late collection of poems†. As to the

* — nor did I ever meet with it in any edition that I have
 seen, as quoted by Mr. Jonson.] See Mr. Tyrwhitt's note on
 Julius Cæsar, Act III. Sc. I. vol. xii. p. 75, n. 8. MALONE.

† — in a late collection of poems.] In the fourth volume of
 State Poems, printed in 1707. Mr. Rowe did not go beyond
 A Late Collection of Poems, and does not seem to have known
 that Shakspeare also wrote 154 Sonnets, and a poem entitled A
 Lover's Complaint. MALONE.

character given of him by Ben Jonson, there is a good deal true in it: but I believe it may be as well expressed by what Horace says of the first Romans, who wrote tragedy upon the Greek models, (or indeed translated them,) in his epistle to Augustus:

“ ——— naturâ sublimis et acer :

“ Nam spirat tragicum satis, et feliciter audet,

“ Sed turpem putat in chartis metuitque lituram.”

As I have not proposed to myself to enter into a large and complete criticism upon Shakspeare's works, so I will only take the liberty, with all due submission to the judgment of others, to observe some of those things I have been pleased with in looking him over.

His plays are properly to be distinguished only into comedies and tragedies. Those which are called histories, and even some of his comedies, are really tragedies, with a run or mixture of comedy amongst them*. That way

* ——— are really tragedies, with a run or mixture of comedy amongst them.] Heywood, our author's contemporary, has stated the best defence that can be made for his intermixing lighter with the more serious scenes of his dramas :

“ It may likewise be objected, why amongst sad and grave histories I have here and there inserted fabulous jests and tales savouring of lightness. I answer, I have therein imitated our *historical, and comical poets*, that write to the stage, who, lest the auditory should be dulled with serious courses, which are merely weighty and material, in every act present some Zany, with his mimick action to breed in the less capable mirth and laughter; *for they that write to all, must strive to please all*. And as such fashion themselves to a multitude diversely addicted, so I to an universality of readers diversely disposed.” Pref. to History of Women, 1624. MALONE.

The criticks who renounce tragi-comedy as barbarous, I fear, speak more from notions which they have formed in their closets, than any well-built theory deduced from experience of what pleases or displeases, which ought to be the foundation of all rules.

Even supposing there is no affectation in this refinement, and that those criticks have really tried and purified their minds till there is no dross remaining, still this can never be the case of a popular audience, to which a dramattick representation is referred.

Dryden in one of his prefaces condemns his own conduct in The Spanish Friar; but, says he, I did not write it to please my-

of tragi-comedy was the common mistake of that age, and is indeed become so agreeable to the English taste, that though the severer criticks among us cannot bear it, yet the generality of our audiences seem to be better pleased with it than with an exact tragedy. The *Merry Wives of Windsor*, The *Comedy of Errors*, and The *Taming of a Shrew*, are all pure comedy; the rest, however they are called, have something of both kinds. It is not very easy to determine which way of writing he was most excellent in. There is certainly a great deal of entertainment in his comical humours; and though they did not then strike at all ranks of people, as the satire of the present age has taken the liberty to do, yet there is a pleasing and a well-distinguished variety in those characters which he thought fit to meddle with. Falstaff is allowed by every body to be a master-piece; the character is always well sustained, though drawn out into the length of three plays; and even the account of his death given by his old landlady Mrs. Quickly, in the first Act of *Henry the*

self, it was given to the publick. Here is an involuntary confession that tragi-comedy is more pleasing to the audience; I would ask then, upon what ground it is condemned?

This ideal excellence of uniformity rests upon a supposition that we are either more refined, or a higher order of beings than we really are: there is no provision made for what may be called the animal part of our minds.

Though we should acknowledge this passion for variety and contrarieties to be the vice of our nature, it is still a propensity which we all feel, and which he who undertakes to divert us must find provision for.

We are obliged, it is true, in our pursuit after science, or excellence in any art, to keep our minds steadily fixed for a long continuance; it is a task we impose upon ourselves: but I do not wish to task myself in my amusements.

If the great object of the theatre is amusement, a dramattick work must possess every means to produce that effect; if it gives instruction by the by, so much its merit is the greater; but that is not its principal object. The ground on which it stands, and which gives it a claim to the protection and encouragement of civilised society, is not because it enforces moral precepts, or gives instruction of any kind; but from the general advantage that it produces, by habituating the mind to find its amusement in intellectual pleasures; weaning it from sensuality, and by degrees filing off, smoothing, and polishing, its rugged corners.

SIR J. REYNOLDS.

Fifth, though it be extremely natural, is yet as diverting as any part of his life. If there be any fault in the draught he has made of this lewd old fellow, it is, that though he has made him a thief, lying, cowardly, vain-glorious, and in short every way vicious, yet he has given him so much wit as to make him almost too agreeable; and I do not know whether some people have not, in remembrance of the diversion he had formerly afforded them, been sorry to see his friend Hal use him so scurvily when he comes to the crown in the end of The Second Part of Henry the Fourth. Amongst other extravagancies, in The Merry Wives of Windsor he has made him a deer-stealer, that he might at the same time remember his Warwickshire prosecutor, under the name of Justice Shallow; he has given him very near the same coat of arms which Dugdale, in his Antiquities of that county, describes for a family there*, and makes the Welsh parson descant very pleasantly upon them. That whole play is admirable; the humours are various and well opposed; the main design, which is to cure Ford of his unreasonable jealousy, is extremely well conducted. In Twelfth Night there is something singularly ridiculous and pleasant in the fantastical steward Malvolio. The parasite and the vain-glorious in Parolles, in All's Well that Ends Well, is as good as any thing of that kind in Plautus or Terence. Petruchio, in The Taming of the Shrew, is an uncommon piece of humour. The conversation of Benedick and Beatrice, in Much Ado about Nothing, and of Rosalind, in As You Like It, have much wit and sprightliness all along. His clowns, without which character there was hardly any play writ in that time, are all very entertaining: and, I believe, Thersites in Troilus and Cressida, and Apemantus in Timon, will be allowed to be master-pieces of ill-nature, and satirical snarling, To these I might

* — the same coat of arms which Dugdale, in his Antiquities of that county, describes for a family there,] There are two coats, I observe, in Dugdale, where three silver fishes are borne in the name of *Lucy*; and another coat to the monument of Thomas Lucy, son of Sir William Lucy, in which are quartered in four several divisions, twelve little fishes, three in each division, probably *lucæ*. This very coat, indeed, seems alluded to in Shallow's giving the *dozen white lucæ*; and in Slender's saying *he may quarter*. THEOBALD.

add, that incomparable character of Shylock the Jew, in *The Merchant of Venice*; but though we have seen that play received and acted as a comedy*, and the part of the Jew performed by an excellent comedian, yet I cannot but think it was designed tragically by the author. There appears in it such a deadly spirit of revenge, such a savage fierceness and fellness, and such a bloody designation of cruelty and mischief, as cannot agree either with the style or characters of comedy. The play itself, take it altogether, seems to me to be one of the most finished of any of Shakspeare's. The tale, indeed, in that part relating to the caskets, and the extravagant and unusual kind of bond given by Antonio, is too much removed from the rules of probability; but taking the fact for granted, we must allow it to be very beautifully written. There is something in the friendship of Antonio to Bassanio very great, generous, and tender. The whole fourth Act (supposing, as I said, the fact to be probable,) is extremely fine. But there are two passages that deserve a particular notice. The first is, what Portia says in praise of mercy, and the other on the power of musick. The melancholy of Jaques, in *As You Like It*, is as singular and odd as it is diverting. And if, what Horace says,

“*Difficile est proprie communia dicere,*”

it will be a hard task for any one to go beyond him in the description of the several degrees and ages of man's life, though the thought be old, and common enough.

* — but though we have seen that play received and acted as a comedy,] In 1701 Lord Lansdown produced his alteration of *The Merchant of Venice*, at the theatre in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, under the title of *The Jew of Venice*, and expressly calls it a *comedy*. Shylock was performed by Mr. Doggett. REED.

And such was the bad taste of our ancestors that this piece continued to be a stock-play from 1701 to Feb. 14, 1741, when *The Merchant of Venice* was exhibited *for the first time* at the theatre in Drury-Lane, and Mr. Macklin made his first appearance in the character of Shylock. MALONE.

In justice to Lord Lansdown it should be mentioned, that the alterations which he made in the part of Shylock were very considerable; and that therefore the misconception of this character must be imputed to the performers. Mr. Reed's censure upon him for calling it a comedy, is altogether unfounded. It is included among the comedies in the first folio, and in the early quartos it is termed *The Comical Historie of The Merchant of Venice*.

BOSWELL.

" — All the world's a stage,
 " And all the men and women merely players ;
 " They have their exits and their entrances,
 " And one man in his time plays many parts,
 " His acts being seven ages. At first, the infant,
 " Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms :
 " And then, the whining school-boy with his satchel,
 " And shining morning face, creeping like snail
 " Unwillingly to school. And then, the lover
 " Sighing like furnace, with a woful ballad
 " Made to his mistress' eye-brow. Then, a soldier ;
 " Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
 " Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,
 " Seeking the bubble reputation
 " Ev'n in the cannon's mouth. And then, the justice ;
 " In fair round belly, with good capon lin'd,
 " With eyes severe, and beard of formal cut,
 " Full of wise saws and modern instances ;
 " And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
 " Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon :
 " With spectacles on nose, and pouch on side ;
 " His youthful hose, well sav'd, a world too wide
 " For his shrunk shank ; and his big manly voice,
 " Turning again tow'rd childish treble, pipes
 " And whistles in his sound : Last scene of all,
 " That ends this strange eventful history,
 " Is second childishness, and mere oblivion ;
 " Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans every thing."

His images are indeed every where so lively, that the thing he would represent stands full before you, and you possess every part of it. I will venture to point out one more, which is, I think, as strong and as uncommon as any thing I ever saw ; it is an image of *Patience*. Speaking of a maid in love, he says,

" — She never told her love,
 " But let concealment, like a worm i'th' bud,
 " Feed on her damask cheek : she pin'd in thought,
 " And sate like *Patience* on a monument,
 " Smiling at *Grief*."

What an image is here given ! and what a task would it have been for the greatest masters of Greece and Rome to have expressed the passions designed by this sketch of statuary ! The style of his comedy is, in general, natural to the characters, and easy in itself ; and the wit most commonly sprightly and pleasing, except in those places where he runs into doggrel rhymes, as in *The*

Comedy of Errors, and some other plays. As for his jingling sometimes, and playing upon words, it was the common vice of the age he lived in: and if we find it in the pulpit, made use of as an ornament to the sermons of some of the gravest divines of those times, perhaps it may not be thought too light for the stage.

But certainly the greatness of this author's genius does no where so much appear, as where he gives his imagination an entire loose, and raises his fancy to a flight above mankind, and the limits of the visible world. Such are his attempts in *The Tempest*, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, *Macbeth*, and *Hamlet*. Of these, *The Tempest*, however it comes to be placed the first by the publishers of his works, can never have been the first written by him: it seems to me as perfect in its kind, as almost any thing we have of his. One may observe, that the unities are kept here, with an exactness uncommon to the liberties of his writing; though that was what, I suppose, he valued himself least upon, since his excellencies were all of another kind. I am very sensible that he does, in this play, depart too much from that likeness to truth which ought to be observed in these sort of writings; yet he does it so very finely, that one is easily drawn in to have more faith for his sake, than reason does well allow of. His magick has something in it very solemn and very poetical: and that extravagant character of Caliban is mighty well sustained, shows a wonderful invention in the author, who could strike out such a particular wild image, and is certainly one of the finest and most uncommon grotesques that ever was seen. The observation, which, I have been informed, three very great men concurred in making* upon this part, was extremely just; that Shakspeare *had not only found out a new character in his Caliban, but had*

* — which, I have been informed, three very great men concurred in making—] Lord Falkland, Lord C. J. Vaughan, and Mr. Selden. ROWE.

Dryden was of the same opinion. "His person (says he, speaking of Caliban,) is monstrous, as he is the product of unnatural lust, and *his language is as hobgoblin as his person*: in all things he is distinguished from other mortals." Preface to *Troilus and Cressida*. MALONE.

See this notion controverted by Dr. Johnson in a note on *The Tempest*, vol. xv. p. 52, n. 2. BOSWELL.

also devised and adapted a new manner of language for that character.

It is the same magick that raises the Fairies in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, the Witches in *Macbeth*, and the Ghost in *Hamlet*, with thoughts and language so proper to the parts they sustain, and so peculiar to the talent of this writer. But of the two last of these plays I shall have occasion to take notice, among the tragedies of Mr. Shakspeare. If one undertook to examine the greatest part of these by those rules which are established by Aristotle, and taken from the model of the Grecian stage, it would be no very hard task to find a great many faults; but as Shakspeare lived under a kind of mere light of nature, and had never been made acquainted with the regularity of those written precepts, so it would be hard to judge him by a law he knew nothing of. We are to consider him as a man that lived in a state of almost universal licence and ignorance: there was no established judge, but every one took the liberty to write according to the dictates of his own fancy. When one considers, that there is not one play before him of a reputation good enough to entitle it to an appearance on the present stage, it cannot but be a matter of great wonder that he should advance dramattick poetry so far as he did. The fable is what is generally placed the first, among those that are reckoned the constituent parts of a tragick or heroick poem; not, perhaps, as it is the most difficult or beautiful, but as it is the first properly to be thought of in the contrivance and course of the whole; and with the fable ought to be considered the fit disposition, order, and conduct of its several parts. As it is not in this province of the drama that the strength and mastery of Shakspeare lay, so I shall not undertake the tedious and ill-natured trouble to point out the several faults he was guilty of in it. His tales were seldom invented, but rather taken either from the true history, or novels and romances: and he commonly made use of them in that order, with those incidents, and that extent of time in which he found them in the authors from whence he borrowed them. So *The Winter's Tale*, which is taken from an old book, called *The Delectable History of Dorastus and Fawnia*, contains the space of sixteen or seventeen years, and the scene is sometimes laid in Bohemia, and sometimes in Sicily, according to the original order of the story. Almost all his

historical plays comprehend a great length of time, and very different and distinct places: and in his Antony and Cleopatra, the scene travels over the greatest part of the Roman empire. But in recompence for his carelessness in this point, when he comes to another part of the drama, the manners of his characters, in acting or speaking what is proper for them, and fit to be shown by the poet, he may be generally justified, and in very many places greatly commended. For those plays which he has taken from the English or Roman history, let any man compare them, and he will find the character as exact in the poet as the historian. He seems indeed so far from proposing to himself any one action for a subject, that the title very often tells you, it is *The Life of King John, King Richard, &c.* What can be more agreeable to the idea our historians give of Henry the Sixth, than the picture Shakspeare has drawn of him? His manners are every where exactly the same with the story; one finds him still described with simplicity, passive sanctity, want of courage, weakness of mind, and easy submission to the governance of an imperious wife, or prevailing faction: though at the same time the poet does justice to his good qualities, and moves the pity of his audience for him, by showing him pious, disinterested, a contemner of the things of this world, and wholly resigned to the severest dispensations of God's providence. There is a short scene in *The Second Part of Henry the Sixth*, which I cannot but think admirable in its kind. Cardinal Beaufort, who had murdered the Duke of Gloucester, is shown in the last agonies on his death-bed, with the good king praying over him. There is so much terror in one, so much tenderness and moving piety in the other, as must touch any one who is capable either of fear or pity. In his *Henry the Eighth*, that prince is drawn with that greatness of mind, and all those good qualities which are attributed to him in any account of his reign. If his faults are not shown in an equal degree, and the shades in this picture do not bear a just proportion to the lights, it is not that the artist wanted either colours or skill in the disposition of them; but the truth, I believe, might be, that he forbore doing it out of regard to Queen Elizabeth, since it could have been no very great respect to the memory of his mistress, to have exposed some certain parts of her father's life upon the stage. He has dealt much more freely with the minister

of that great king; and certainly nothing was ever more justly written, than the character of Cardinal Wolsey. He has shown him insolent in his prosperity; and yet, by a wonderful address, he makes his fall and ruin the subject of general compassion. The whole man, with his vices and virtues, is finely and exactly described in the second scene of the fourth Act. The distresses likewise of Queen Katharine, in this play, are very movingly touched; and though the art of the poet has screened King Henry from any gross imputation of injustice, yet one is inclined to wish, the Queen had met with a fortune more worthy of her birth and virtue. Nor are the manners, proper to the persons represented, less justly observed, in those characters taken from the Roman history; and of this, the fierceness and impatience of Coriolanus, his courage and disdain of the common people, the virtue and philosophical temper of Brutus, and the irregular greatness of mind in M. Antony, are beautiful proofs. For the two last especially, you find them exactly as they are described by Plutarch, from whom certainly Shakspeare copied them. He has indeed followed his original pretty close, and taken in several little incidents that might have been spared in a play. But, as I hinted before, his design seems most commonly rather to describe those great men in the several fortunes and accidents of their lives, than to take any single great action, and form his work simply upon that. However, there are some of his pieces, where the fable is founded upon one action only. Such are more especially, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, and *Othello*. The design in *Romeo and Juliet* is plainly the punishment of their two families, for the unreasonable feuds and animosities that had been so long kept up between them, and occasioned the effusion of so much blood. In the management of this story, he has shown something wonderfully tender and passionate in the love-part, and very pitiful in the distress. *Hamlet* is founded on much the same tale with the *Electra* of Sophocles. In each of them a young prince is engaged to revenge the death of his father, their mothers are equally guilty, are both concerned in the murder of their husbands*, and are

* — are both concerned in the murder of their husbands,] It does not appear that *Hamlet's* mother was concerned in the death of her husband. MALONE.

afterwards married to the murderers. There is in the first part of the Greek tragedy something very moving in the grief of Electra; but, as Mr. Dacier has observed, there is something very unnatural and shocking in the manners he has given that princess and Orestes in the latter part. Orestes imbrues his hands in the blood of his own mother; and that barbarous action is performed, though not immediately upon the stage, yet so near, that the audience hear Clytemnestra crying out to Ægysthus for help, and to her son for mercy: while Electra her daughter, and a princess, (both of them characters that ought to have appeared with more decency,) stands upon the stage, and encourages her brother in the parricide. What horror does this not raise! Clytemnestra was a wicked woman, and had deserved to die; nay, in the truth of the story, she was killed by her own son; but to represent an action of this kind on the stage, is certainly an offence against those rules of manners proper to the persons, that ought to be observed there. On the contrary, let us only look a little on the conduct of Shakspeare. Hamlet is represented with the same piety towards his father, and resolution to revenge his death, as Orestes; he has the same abhorrence for his mother's guilt, which, to provoke him the more, is heightened by incest: but it is with wonderful art and justness of judgment, that the poet restrains him from doing violence to his mother. To prevent any thing of that kind, he makes his father's Ghost forbid that part of his vengeance:

" But howsoever thou pursu'st this act,
 " Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
 " Against thy mother aught; leave her to heaven,
 " And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,
 " To prick and sting her."

This is to distinguish rightly between *horror* and *terror*. The latter is a proper passion of tragedy, but the former ought always to be carefully avoided. And certainly no dramatick writer ever succeeded better in raising *terror* in the minds of an audience than Shakspeare has done. The whole tragedy of Macbeth, but more especially the scene where the King is murdered, in the second Act, as well as this play, is a noble proof of that manly spirit with which he writ; and both show how powerful he was, in giving the strongest motions to our souls that they

are capable of. I cannot leave Hamlet, without taking notice of the advantage with which we have seen this master-piece of Shakspeare distinguish itself upon the stage, by Mr. Betterton's fine performance of that part. A man, who, though he had no other good qualities, as he has a great many, must have made his way into the esteem of all men of letters, by this only excellency. No man is better acquainted with Shakspeare's manner of expression, and indeed he has studied him so well, and is so much a master of him, that whatever part of his he performs, he does it as if it had been written on purpose for him, and that the author had exactly conceived it as he plays it. I must own a particular obligation to him, for the most considerable part of the passages relating to this life, which I have here transmitted to the publick; his veneration for the memory of Shakspeare having engaged him to make a journey into Warwickshire on purpose to gather up what remains he could, of a name for which he had so great a veneration*.

* — of a name for which he had so great a veneration.] Mr. Betterton was born in 1635, and had many opportunities of collecting information relative to Shakspeare, but unfortunately the age in which he lived was not an age of curiosity. Had either he or Dryden or Sir William D'Avenant taken the trouble to visit our poet's youngest daughter, who lived till 1662, or his grand-daughter, who did not die till 1670, many particulars might have been preserved which are now irrecoverably lost. Shakspeare's sister, Joan Hart, who was only five years younger than him, died at Stratford in Nov. 1646, at the age of seventy-six; and from her undoubtedly his two daughters, and his grand-daughter Lady Barnard, had learned several circumstances of his early history antecedent to the year 1600. MALONE.

This Account of the Life of Shakspeare is printed from Mr. Rowe's second edition, in which it had been abridged and altered by himself after its appearance in 1709. STEEVENS.

To the foregoing Accounts of Shakspeare's Life, I have only one Passage to add, which Mr. Pope related, as communicated to him by Mr. Rowe.

IN the time of Elizabeth, coaches being yet uncommon, and hired coaches not at all in use, those who were too proud, too tender, or too idle to walk, went on horseback to any distant business or diversion. Many came on horseback to the play*, and when Shakspeare fled to London from the terror of a criminal prosecution, his first expedient was to wait at the door of the playhouse, and hold the horses of those that had no servants, that they might be ready again after the performance. In this office he became so conspicuous for his care and readiness, that in a short time every man as he alighted called for Will. Shakspeare, and scarcely any other waiter was trusted with a horse while Will. Shakspeare could be had. This was the first dawn of better fortune. Shakspeare, finding more horses put into his hand than he could hold, hired boys to wait under his inspection, who, when Will. Shakspeare was summoned, were immediately to present themselves, *I am Shakspeare's boy, Sir.* In time, Shakspeare found higher employment: but as long as the practice of riding to the playhouse continued, the waiters that held the horses retained the appellation of, *Shakspeare's boys*†. JOHNSON.

* Many came on horseback to the play,] Plays were at this time performed in the afternoon. "The pollicie of plaies is very necessary, howsoever some shallow-brained censurers (not the deepest searchers into the secrets of government) mightily opugne them. For whereas *the afternoon* being the idlest time of the day wherein men that are their own masters (as gentlemen of the court, the innes of the court, and a number of captains and soldiers about London) do wholly bestow themselves upon pleasure, and that pleasure they divide (how vertuously it skills not) either in gaming, following of harlots, drinking, or seeing a play, is it not better (since of four extreames all the world cannot keepe them but they will choose one) that they should betake them to the least, which is plaies?" Nash's *Pierce Penilisse* his Supplication to the Devil, 1592. STEEVENS.

† — the waiters that held the horses retained the appellation of, *Shakspeare's boys.*] I cannot dismiss this anecdote without observing that it seems to want every mark of probability. Though Shakspeare quitted Stratford on account of a juvenile

Mr. Rowe has told us, that he derived the principal anecdotes in his account of Shakspeare, from Betterton

irregularity, we have no reason to suppose that he had forfeited the protection of his father who was engaged in a lucrative business, or the love of his wife who had already brought him two children, and was herself the daughter of a substantial yeoman. It is unlikely therefore, when he was beyond the reach of his prosecutor, that he should conceal his plan of life, or place of residence, from those who, if he found himself distressed, could not fail to afford him such supplies as would have set him above the necessity of *holding horses* for subsistence. Mr. Malone has remarked in his Attempt to ascertain the Order in which the Plays of Shakspeare were written, that he might have found an easy introduction to the stage; for Thomas Green, a celebrated comedian of that period, was his townsman, and perhaps his relation. The genius of our author prompted him to write poetry; his connection with a player might have given his productions a dramatick turn: or his own sagacity might have taught him that fame was not incompatible with profit, and that the theatre was an avenue to both. That it was once the general custom to ride on horse-back to the play, I am likewise yet to learn. The most popular of the theatres were on the Bankside; and we are told by the satirical pamphletteers of that time, that the usual mode of conveyance to these places of amusement, was by water, but not a single writer so much as hints at the custom of riding to them, or at the practice of having horses held during the hours of exhibition. Some allusion to this usage, (if it had existed) must, I think, have been discovered in the course of our researches after contemporary fashions. Let it be remembered too, that we receive this tale on no higher authority than that of Cibber's *Lives of the Poets*, vol. i. p. 130. "Sir William Davenant told it to Mr. Betterton, who communicated it to Mr. Rowe," who (according to Dr. Johnson) related it to Mr. Pope. Mr. Rowe (if this intelligence be authentick) seems to have concurred with me in opinion, as he forbore to introduce a circumstance so incredible into his *Life of Shakspeare*. As to the book which furnishes the anecdote, not the smallest part of it was the composition of Mr. Cibber, being entirely written by a Mr. Shiells, amanuensis to Dr. Johnson, when his Dictionary was preparing for the press. T. Cibber was in the King's Bench, and accepted of ten guineas from the booksellers for leave to prefix his name to the work; and it was purposely so prefixed as to leave the reader in doubt whether himself or his father was the person designed.

The foregoing anecdote relative to Cibber's *Lives*, &c. I received from Dr. Johnson. See, however, *The Monthly Review*, for December, 1781, p. 409. STEEVENS.

the player, whose zeal had induced him to visit Stratford, for the sake of procuring all possible intelligence concerning a poet to whose works he might justly think himself under the strongest obligations. Notwithstanding this assertion, in the manuscript papers of the late Mr. Oldys it is said, that one Bowman (according to Chetwood, p. 143, "an actor more than half an age on the London theatres") was unwilling to allow that his associate and contemporary Betterton had ever undertaken such a journey*. Be this matter as it will, the following particulars, which I shall give in the words of Oldys, are, for aught we know to the contrary, as well authenticated as any of the anecdotes delivered down to us by Rowe.

Mr. Oldys had covered several quires of paper with laborious collections for a regular life of our author. From these I have made the following extracts, which (however trivial) contain the only circumstances that wear the least appearance of novelty or information; the song in p. 62 excepted. [This song will now be found in Mr. Malone's Life of Shakspeare, vol. ii. p. 141.]

* — it is said, that one Bowman—was unwilling to allow that his associate and contemporary Betterton had ever undertaken such a journey.] This assertion of Mr. Oldys is altogether unworthy of credit. Why any doubt should be entertained concerning Mr. Betterton's having visited Stratford, after Rowe's positive assertion that he did so, it is not easy to conceive. Mr. Rowe did not go there himself; and how could he have collected the few circumstances relative to Shakspeare and his family, which he has told, if he had not obtained information from some friend who examined the Register of the parish of Stratford, and made personal inquiries on the subject?

"Bowman," we are told, "was unwilling to *believe*," &c. But the fact disputed did not require any exercise of his *belief*. Mr. Bowman was married to the daughter of Sir Francis Watson, Bart. the gentleman with whom Betterton joined in an adventure to the East Indies, whose name the writer of Betterton's Life in Biographia Britannica has so studiously concealed. By that unfortunate scheme Betterton lost above 2000*l.* Dr. Ratcliffe 6000*l.* and Sir Francis Watson his whole fortune. On his death soon after the year 1692, Betterton generously took his daughter under his protection, and educated her in his house. Here Bowman married her; from which period he continued to live in the most friendly correspondence with Mr. Betterton, and must have *known* whether he went to Stratford or not. MALONE.

" If tradition may be trusted, Shakspeare often baited at the Crown Inn or Tavern in Oxford, in his journey to and from London. The landlady was a woman of great beauty and sprightly wit, and her husband, Mr. John Davenant, (afterwards mayor of that city,) a grave melancholy man; who, as well as his wife, used much to delight in Shakspeare's pleasant company. Their son young Will. Davenant (afterwards Sir William) was then a little school-boy in the town, of about seven or eight years old*, and so fond also of Shakspeare, that whenever he heard of his arrival, he would fly from school to see him. One day an old townsman observing the boy running homeward almost out of breath, asked him whither he was posting in that heat and hurry. He answered, to see his *god-father* Shakspeare. There's a good boy, said the other, but have a care that you don't take *God's* name in vain. This story Mr. Pope told me at the Earl of Oxford's table, upon occasion of some discourse which arose about Shakspeare's monument then newly erected in Westminster Abbey; and he quoted Mr. Betterton the player for his authority. I answered, that I thought such a story might have enriched the variety of those choice fruits of observations he has presented us in his preface to the edition he had published of our poet's works. He replied—" There might be in the garden of mankind such plants as would seem to pride themselves more in a regular production of their own native fruits, than in having the repute of bearing a richer kind by grafting; and this was the reason he omitted it†."

* — of about seven or eight years old,] He was born at Oxford in February 1605-6. MALONE.

† — and this was the reason he omitted it.] Mr. Oldys might have added, that *he* was the person who suggested to Mr. Pope the singular course which he pursued in his edition of Shakspeare. "Remember," says Oldys in a MS. note to his copy of Langbaine, Article, Shakspeare, "what I observed to my Lord Oxford for Mr. Pope's use, out of Cowley's preface." The observation here alluded to, I believe, is one made by Cowley in his preface, p. 53, edit. 1710, 8vo: "This has been the case with Shakspeare, Fletcher, Jonson, and many others, part of whose poems I should presume to take the boldness to *prune and lop away*, if the care of *replanting them in print* did belong to me; neither would I make any scruple to cut off from some the unnecessary young suckers, and from others the old withered

The same story, without the names of the persons, is printed among the jests of John Taylor the Water-poet, in his works, folio, 1630, p. 184, N^o 39: and, with some variations, may be found in one of Hearne's pocket books*.

branches; for a great wit is no more tied to live in a vast volume, than in a gigantick body; on the contrary it is commonly more vigorous the less space it animates, and as Statius says of little Tydeus,—

———— totos infusa per artus,
Major in exiguo regnabat corpore virtus.

Pope adopted this very unwarrantable idea; striking out from the text of his author whatever he did not like: and Cowley himself has suffered a sort of poetical punishment for having suggested it, the learned Bishop of Worcester [Dr. Hurd] having *pruned* and *lopped away* his beautiful luxuriances, as Pope, on Cowley's suggestion, did those of Shakspeare.

MALONE.

* The same story—may be found in one of Herne's pocket-books.] Antony Wood is the first and original author of the anecdote that Shakspeare, in his journeys from Warwickshire to London, used to bait at the Crown-Inn on the west side of the corn market in Oxford. He says that D'Avenant the poet was born in that house in 1606. "His father (he adds) John Davenant, was a sufficient vintner, kept the tavern now known by the sign of the Crown, and was mayor of the said city in 1621. His mother was a very beautiful woman, of a good wit and conversation, in which she was imitated by none of her children but by this *William* [the poet]. The father, who was a very grave and discreet citizen, (yet an admirer and lover of plays and play-makers, especially *Shakspeare*, who frequented his house in his journeys between Warwickshire and London,) was of a melancholick disposition, and was seldom or never seen to laugh, in which he was imitated by none of his children but by Robert his eldest son, afterwards fellow of St. John's College, and a venerable Doctor of Divinity." Wood's *Ath. Oxon.* vol. ii. p. 292, edit. 1692. I will not suppose that Shakspeare could have been the father of a Doctor of Divinity who never laughed; but it was always a constant tradition in Oxford that Shakspeare was the father of Davenant the poet. And I have seen this circumstance expressly mentioned in some of Wood's papers. Wood was well qualified to know these particulars; for he was a townsman of Oxford, where he was born in 1632. Wood says, that Davenant went to school in Oxford. *Ubi supra.*

“ One of Shakspeare’s younger brothers, who lived to a good old age, even some years, as I compute, after the restoration of *King Charles II.* would in his younger days come to London to visit his brother *Will*, as he called him, and be a spectator of him as an actor in some of his own plays. This custom, as his brother’s fame enlarged, and his dramattick entertainments grew the greatest support of our principal, if not of all our theatres, he continued it seems so long after his brother’s death, as even to the latter end of his own life. The curiosity at this time of the most noted actors [exciting them] to learn something from him of his brother, &c. they justly held him in the highest veneration. And it may be well believed, as there was besides a kinsman and descendant of the family, who was then a celebrated actor among them, [*Charles Hart*. See Shakspeare’s *Will*.] this opportunity made them greedily inquisitive into every little circumstance, more especially in his dramattick character, which his brother could relate of him. But he, it seems, was so stricken in years, and possibly his memory so weakened with infirmities, (which might make him the easier pass for a man of weak intellects,) that he could give them but little light into their enquiries; and all that could be re-

As to the *Crown Inn*, it still remains as an inn, and is an old decayed house, but probably was once a principal inn in Oxford. It is directly in the road from Stratford to London. In a large upper room, which seems to have been a sort of *Hall* for entertaining a large company, or for accommodating (as was the custom) different parties at once, there was a bow-window, with three pieces of excellent painted glass. About eight years ago, I remember visiting this room, and proposing to purchase of the landlord the painted glass, which would have been a curiosity as coming from Shakspeare’s inn. But going thither soon after, I found it was removed; the inn-keeper having communicated my intended bargain to the owner of the house, who began to suspect that he was possessed of a curiosity too valuable to be parted with, or to remain in such a place: and I never could hear of it afterwards. If I remember right, the painted glass consisted of three armorial shields beautifully stained. I have said so much on this subject, because I think that Shakspeare’s old hostelry at Oxford deserves no less respect than Chaucer’s *Tabarde* in Southwark. T. WARTON.

collected from him of his brother *Will.* in that station was, the faint, general, and almost lost ideas he had of having once seen him act a part in one of his own comedies, wherein being to personate a decrepit old man, he wore a long beard, and appeared so weak and drooping and unable to walk, that he was forced to be supported and carried by another person to a table, at which he was seated among some company, who were eating, and one of them sung a song." See the character of Adam, in *As You Like It*, Act II. Sc. ult.

"Verses by Ben Jonson and Shakspeare, occasioned by the motto to the Globe Theatre—*Totus mundus agit histrionem.*

Jonson.

'If, but *stage actors*, all the world displays,
'Where shall we find *spectators* of their plays?'

Shakspeare.

'Little, or much, of what we see, we do ;
'We are all both *actors* and *spectators* too.'

"Poetical Characteristicks, 8vo. MS. vol. i. some time in the Harleian Library ; which volume was returned to its owner."

"Old Mr. Bowman the player reported from Sir William Bishop, that some part of Sir John Falstaff's character was drawn from a townsman of Stratford, who either faithlessly broke a contract, or spitefully refused to part with some land for a valuable consideration, adjoining to Shakspeare's, in or near that town."

To these anecdotes I can only add the following :

At the conclusion of the advertisement prefixed to Lintot's edition of Shakspeare's Poems, it is said, "That most learned prince and great patron of learning, King James the First, was pleased with his own hand to write an amicable letter to Mr. Shakspeare; which letter, though now lost, remained long in the hands of Sir

William D'Avenant *, as a credible person now living can testify."

Mr. Oldys, in a MS. note to his copy of Fuller's Worthies, observes, that "the story came from the Duke of Buckingham, who had it from Sir William D'Avenant."

It appears from Roscius Anglicanus, (commonly called Downes the prompter's book,) 1708, that Shakspeare took the pains to instruct Joseph Taylor in the character of Hamlet, and John Lowine in that of King Henry VIII.

STEEVENS.

The late Mr. Thomas Osborne, bookseller, (whose exploits are celebrated by the author of the Dunciad,) being ignorant in what form or language our Paradise Lost was written, employed one of his garretteers to render it from a French translation into English prose. Lest, hereafter, the compositions of Shakspeare should be brought back into their native tongue from the version of Monsieur le Compte de Catuelan, le Tourneur, &c. it may be necessary to observe, that all the following particulars, extracted from the preface of these gentlemen, are as little founded in truth as their description of the ridiculous Jubilee at Stratford, which they have been taught to represent as an affair of general approbation and national concern.

They say, that Shakspeare came to London without a plan, and finding himself at the door of a theatre, instinctively stopped there, and offered himself to be a holder of horses:—that he was remarkable for his excellent performance of the Ghost in Hamlet:—that he borrowed nothing from preceding writers:—that all on a sudden he left the stage, and returned without eclat into his native country:—that his monument at Stratford is of copper:—that the courtiers of James I. paid several com-

* — whibh letter, though now lost, remained long in the hands of Sir William D'Avenant,] Dr. Farmer with great probability supposes that this letter was written by King James in return for the compliment paid to him in Macbeth. The relater of this anecdote was Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham.

pliments to him which are still preserved :—that he relieved a widow, who, together with her numerous family, was involved in a ruinous lawsuit :—that his editors have restored many passages in his plays, by the assistance of the manuscripts he left behind him, &c. &c.

Let me not, however, forget the justice due to these ingenious Frenchmen, whose skill and fidelity in the execution of their very difficult undertaking, is only exceeded by such a display of candour as would serve to cover the imperfections of much less elegant and judicious writers.

STEEVENS.

ANCIENT AND MODERN

COMMENDATORY VERSES

ON

SHAKSPEARE.

On William Shakspeare, who died in April, 1616¹.

RENOWNED Spenser, lie a thought² more nigh
To learned Chaucer; and rare Beaumont lie

¹ In a collection of manuscript poems which was in the possession of the late Gustavus Brander, Esq. these verses are entitled—"Basse his Elegie one [*on*] poett Shakspeare, who died in April 1616." The MS. appears to have been written soon after the year 1621. In the edition of our author's poems in 1640, they are subscribed with the initials W. B. only. They were erroneously attributed to Dr. Donne, in a quarto edition of his poems printed in 1633; but his son Dr. John Donne, a Civilian, published a more correct edition of his father's poems in 1635, and rejected the verses on Shakspeare, knowing, without doubt, that they were written by another.

William Basse, according to Wood, [*Athen. Oxon.* vol. ii. p. 812,] "was of Moreton, near Thame in Oxfordshire, and was sometime a retainer to the Lord Wenman of Thame Park." There are some verses by him in *Annalia Dubrensia*, 4to. 1636; and in *Bathurst's Life and Remains*, by the Reverend Thomas Warton, 8vo. 1761, there is a poem by Dr. Bathurst "to Mr. William Basse, upon the *intended* publication of his Poems, Jan. 13, 1651." The volume never, I believe, appeared; but there is in the collection of Richard Slater, Esq. a volume of MS. poems by Basse, entitled *Polyhymnia*, containing six copies of verses on various subjects.

A little nearer Spenser, to make room
For Shakspeare, in your three-fold, four-fold tomb.

From the words "who died in April, 1616," it may be inferred that these lines were written recently after Shakspeare's death, when the month and year in which he died were well known. At a more distant period the month would probably have been forgotten; and that was not an age of such curiosity as would have induced a poet to search the register at Stratford on such a subject. From the address to Chaucer and Spenser it should seem, that when these verses were composed the writer thought it probable that a cenotaph would be erected to Shakspeare in Westminster Abbey.

There is a copy of these lines in a manuscript volume of poems written by W. Herrick and others, among Rawlinson's Collections in the Bodleian library at Oxford; and another among the Sloanian MSS. in the Museum, N^o. 1702. In the Oxford copy they are entitled "Shakspeare's Epitaph;" but the author is not mentioned. There are some slight variations in the different copies, which I shall set down.

Line 2. "To rare Beaumond, and learned Beaumond lie," &c.
Edit. 1633.

Line 5. "To lodge in one bed all four make a shift."
MS. Brander.

"To lodge all four in one bed," &c. MS. R. and S.

"To lie all four," &c. Edit. 1633.

Line 7. So B. S. and R.

"—— by *fates* be slain." Edit. 1633.

Line 8. So B. and S.

"—— *will* be drawn again." R.

"—— *need* be drawn again." 1633.

Line 9. "But if precedency of death," &c. Edit. 1633.

"*If your* precedency in death," &c. B. R. S.

Line 10. So B. R. and edit. 1633.

"A fourth to have place in your sepulcher." S.

Line 11. So B. and R.

"—— under this *curled* marble of thine own."

Edit. 1633.

"—— under this *sable*," &c. S.

To lodge all four in one bed make a shift
 Until doomsday; for hardly will a fift³
 Betwixt this day and that by fate be slain,
 For whom your curtains may be drawn again.
 But if precedency in death doth bar
 A fourth place in your sacred sepulchre,
 Under this carved marble of thine own,
 Sleep, rare tragedian, Shakspeare, sleep alone.
 Thy unmolested peace, unshared cave,
 Possess, as lord, not tenant, of thy grave;
 That unto us and others it may be
 Honour hereafter to be laid by thee.

WILLIAM BASSE.

*To the Memory of my Beloved the Author, Mr. William
 Shakspeare, and what he hath left us.*

To draw no envy, Shakspeare, on thy name,
 Am I thus ample to thy book, and fame;

Line 12. So, B. S. and edit. 1633.

"Sleep, rare *comedian*," &c. R.

Line 13. So, B. and R.

"*Thine* unmolested peace, unshared cave."—S.

"Thy unmolested peace in an *unshared* cave."—

Edit. 1633.

Line 14. So, B.

"Possess as lord not tenant *of the* grave." S.

"————— to thy grave." R.

This couplet is not in edit. 1633.

Line 15. So, edit. 1633.

"That unto us, or others," &c. B. R. and S.

MALONE.

² — a thought —] i. e. a little, a small space; the phraseology of the time. See note on *Much Ado about Nothing*, Act III. Sc. IV. REED.

³ *Fifth* was formerly corruptly written and pronounced *fift*. I have adhered to the old spelling on account of the rhyme. This

While I confess thy writings to be such,
 As neither man, nor muse, can praise too much;
 'Tis true, and all men's suffrage: but these ways
 Were not the paths I meant unto thy praise:
 For seeliest ignorance on these may light,
 Which, when it sounds at best, but echoes right;
 Or blind affection, which doth ne'er advance
 The truth, but gropes, and urgeth all by chance;
 Or crafty malice might pretend this praise,
 And think to ruin, where it seem'd to raise:
 These are, as some infâmous bawd, or whore,
 Should praise a matron; what could hurt her more?
 But thou art proof against them; and, indeed,
 Above the ill fortune of them, or the need:
 I, therefore, will begin:—Soul of the age,
 The applause, delight, the wonder of our stage,
 My Shakspeare, rise! I will not lodge thee by
 Chaucer, or Spenser; or bid Beaumont lie
 A little further, to make thee a room ⁴:
 Thou art a monument without a tomb;
 And art alive still, while thy book doth live,
 And we have wits to read, and praise to give.
 That I not mix thee so, my brain excuses;
 I mean, with great but disproportion'd muses:
 For, if I thought my judgment were of years,
 I should commit thee surely with thy peers;
 And tell—how far thou didst our Lyly outshine ⁵,
 Or sporting Kyd ⁶, or Marlowe's mighty line ⁷.

corrupt pronunciation yet prevails in Scotland, and in many parts of England. MALONE.

⁴ — to make thee a room:] See the preceding verses by Basse. MALONE.

⁵ — our LYLly outshine,] Lyly wrote nine plays during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, viz. Alexander and Campaspe, T. C.; Endymion, C.; Galatea, C.; Loves Metamorphosis, Dram. Past.; Maids Metamorphosis, C.; Mother Bombie, C.; Mydas,

And though thou hadst small Latin, and less Greek,
From thence to honour thee, I would not seek

C.; Sapho and Phao, C.; and Woman in the Moon, C. To the pedantry of this author perhaps we are indebted for the first attempt to polish and reform our language. See his *Euphues* and his *England*. STEEVENS.

6 — or sporting Kyd,] It appears from Heywood's *Actor's Vindication* that Thomas Kyd was the author of the *Spanish Tragedy*. The late Mr. Hawkins was of opinion that *Soliman and Perseda* was by the same hand. The only piece, however, which has descended to us, even with the initial letters of his name affixed to it, is *Pompey the Great his fair Cornelia's Tragedy*, which was first published in 1594, and, with some alteration in the title-page, again in 1595. This is no more than a translation from Robert Garnier, a French poet, who distinguished himself during the reigns of Charles IX. Henry III. and Henry IV. and died at Mons in 1602, in the 56th year of his age. STEEVENS.

7 — or MARLOWE's mighty line.] Marlowe was a performer as well as an author. His contemporary Heywood, calls him *the best of our poets*. He wrote six tragedies, viz. *Dr. Faustus's Tragical History*; *King Edward II.*; *Jew of Malta*; *Lust's Dominion*; *Massacre of Paris*; and *Tamburlaine the Great*, in two parts. He likewise joined with Nash in writing *Dido Queen of Carthage*, and had begun a translation of Musæus's *Hero and Leander*, which was finished by Chapman, and published in 1606.

STEEVENS.

Christopher Marlowe was born probably about the year 1566, as he took the degree of Bachelor of Arts at Cambridge, in 1583. I do not believe that he ever was an actor, nor can I find any authority for it higher than the *Theatrum Poetarum* of Phillips, in 1674, which is inaccurate in many circumstances. Beard, who four years after Marlowe's death gave a particular account of him, does not speak of him as an actor. "He was," says that writer, "by profession a scholler, brought up from his youth in the universitie of Cambridge, but by practice a *playmaker* and a *poet* of scurrilitie." Neither Drayton, nor Decker, nor Nashe, nor the author of *The Return from Parnassus*, 1606, nor Heywood in his prologue to *The Jew of Malta*, give the slightest intimation of

For names; but call forth thund'ring Æschylus,
 Euripides, and Sophocles, to us,
 Pacuvius, Accius, him of Cordoua dead,
 To life again, to hear thy buskin tread
 And shake a stage; or, when thy socks were on,
 Leave thee alone; for the comparison
 Of all that insolent Greece, or haughty Rome,
 Sent forth, or since did from their ashes come.
 Triumph, my Britain! thou hast one to show,
 To whom all scenes of Europe homage owe.
 He was not of an age, but for all time;
 And all the muses still were in their prime,
 When like Apollo he came forth to warm
 Our ears, or like a Mercury to charm.
 Nature herself was proud of his designs,
 And joy'd to wear the dressing of his lines;
 Which were so richly spun, and woven so fit,
 As, since, she will vouchsafe no other wit:
 The merry Greek, tart Aristophanes,
 Neat Terence, witty Plautus, now not please;
 But antiquated and deserted lie,
 As they were not of Nature's family.
 Yet must I not give Nature all; thy art,
 My gentle Shakspeare, must enjoy a part⁸:—

Marlowe's having trod the stage. He was stabbed in the street, and died of the wound, in 1593. His *Hero and Leander* was published in quarto, in 1598, by Edward Blount as an imperfect work. The fragment ended with this line:

“Dang'd down to hell her loathsome carriage.”

Chapman completed the poem, and published it as it now appears, in 1600. MALONE.

⁸ — thy ART,

My gentle Shakspeare, must enjoy a part:] Yet this writer, in his conversation with Mr. Drummond of Hawthornden in 1619, said, that Shakspeare “wanted *art*, and sometimes sense.”

MALONE.

For though the poet's matter nature be,
 His art doth give the fashion: and that he,
 Who casts to write a living line, must sweat,
 (Such as thine are) and strike the second heat
 Upon the muses' anvil; turn the same,
 (And himself with it) that he thinks to frame;
 Or, for the laurel, he may gain a scorn,—
 For a good poet's made, as well as born:
 And such wert thou. Look, how the father's face
 Lives in his issue; even so the race
 Of Shakspeare's mind, and manners, brightly shines
 In his well-torned and true-filed lines⁹;

⁹ — true-FILED lines;] The same praise is given to Shakspeare by a preceding writer. "As Epius Stolo said that the Muses would speak with Plautus his tongue, if they would speak Latin, so I say that the Muses would speak with Shakspeare's fine *filed* phrase, if they would speak English." *Wit's Treasury*, by Francis Meres, 1598.

It is somewhat singular that at a subsequent period Shakspeare was censured for the want of that elegance which is here justly attributed to him. "Though all the laws of Heroick Poem," says the author of *Theatrum Poetarum*, 1674, "all the laws of tragedy, were exactly observed, yet still this *tour entrejanté*, this poetick *energie*, if I may so call it, would be required to give life to all the rest; which shines through the roughest, most unpolished and antiquated language, and may haply be wanting in the most polite and reformed. Let us observe Spenser, with all his rustick obsolete words, with all his rough-hewn clouterly phrases, yet take him throughout, and we shall find in him a graceful and poetick majestie: in like manner Shakspeare, in spite of all his *unfiled* expressions, his rambling and indigested fancies, the laughter of the critical, yet must be confessed a poet above many that go beyond him in literature some degrees."

MALONE.

"In his WELL-TORNED and true-filed lines;"] Jonson is here translating the classick phrases *tornati et limati versus*.

In each of which he seems to shake a lance,
 As brandish'd at the eyes of ignorance.
 Sweet swan of Avon, what a sight it were,
 To see thee in our waters yet appear;
 And make those flights upon the banks of Thames,
 That so did take Eliza, and our James!
 But stay; I see thee in the hemisphere
 Advanc'd, and made a constellation there:—
 Shine forth, thou star of poets; and with rage,
 Or influence, chide, or cheer, the drooping stage;
 Which, since thy flight from hence, hath mourn'd like
 night,
 And despairs day, but for thy volume's light!

BEN JONSON.

*Upon the Lines, and Life, of the famous Scenick Poet,
 Master William Shakspeare.*

Those hands which you so clapp'd, go now and
 wring,
 You Britains brave; for done are Shakspeare's days;
 His days are done that made the dainty plays,
 Which made the globe of heaven and earth to ring:
 Dry'd is that vein, dry'd is the Thespian spring,
 Turn'd all to tears, and Phæbus clouds his rays;
 That corpse, that coffin, now bestick those bays,
 Which crown'd him poet first, then poet's king.

Does not the poet in the next line, by the expression *shake a lance*, intend to play on the name of *Shakspeare*? So, in *Two Bookes of Epigrammes and Epitaphs*, by Thomas Bancroft, Lond. 1639, 4to.

“ TO SHAKSPEARE.

“ Thou hast so used thy pen, (or *shooke thy speare*,)

“ That poets startle, nor thy wit come near.”

Dryden, in his Dedication to his Translation of Juvenal, terms these verses by Jonson *an insolent, sparing, and invidious panegyrick*. HOLT WHITE.

If tragedies might any prologue have,
 All those he made would scarce make one to this ;
 Where fame, now that he gone is to the grave,
 (Death's publick tiring-house) the Nuntius is :
 For, though his line of life went soon about,
 The life yet of his lines shall never out.

HUGH HOLLAND¹.

*To the Memory of the deceased Author, Master William
 Shakspeare.*

Shakspeare, at length thy pious fellows give
 The world thy works ; thy works, by which outlive
 Thy tomb, thy name must : when that stone is rent,
 And time dissolves thy Stratford monument,
 Here we alive shall view thee still ; this book,
 When brass and marble fade, shall make thee look
 Fresh to all ages, when posterity
 Shall loath what's new, think all is prodigy
 That is not Shakspeare's, every line, each verse,
 Here shall revive, redeem thee from thy herse.
 Nor fire, nor cank'ring age,—as Naso said
 Of his,—thy wit-fraught book shall once invade :
 Nor shall I e'er believe or think thee dead,
 Though miss'd, until our bankrout stage be sped
 (Impossible) with some new strain to out-do
 Passions “ of Juliet, and her Romeo ; ”
 Or till I hear a scene more nobly take,
 Than when thy half-sword parlying Romans spake :
 Till these, till any of thy volume's rest,
 Shall with more fire, more feeling be express'd,
 Be sure, our Shakspeare, thou canst never die,
 But, crown'd with laurel, live eternally. L. DIGGES².

¹ See Wood's *Athenæ Oxon.* edit. 1721, vol. i. p. 583.

STEEVENS.

² See Wood's *Athenæ Oxonienses*, vol. i. p. 599 and 600.

To the Memory of Master W. Shakspeare.

We wonder'd, Shakspeare, that thou went'st so soon
 From the world's stage to the grave's tiring-room :
 We thought thee dead ; but this thy printed worth
 Tells thy spectators, that thou went'st but forth
 To enter with applause : an actor's art
 Can die, and live to act a second part :
 That's but an exit of mortality,
 This a re-entrance to a plaudite.

J. M.³

*Upon the Effigies of my worthy Friend, the Author,
 Master William Shakspeare, and his Works.*

Spectator, this life's shadow is ;—to see
 This truer image, and a livelier he,
 Turn reader : but observe his comick vein,
 Laugh ; and proceed next to a tragick strain,
 Then weep : so,—when thou find'st two contraries,
 Two different passions from thy rapt soul rise,—
 Say, (who alone effect such wonders could),
 Rare Shakspeare to the life thou dost behold 4.

On worthy Master Shakspeare, and his Poems.

A mind reflecting ages past, whose clear
 And equal surface can make things appear,
 Distant a thousand years, and represent
 Them in their lively colours, just extent :

edit. 1721. His translation of Claudian's Rape of Proserpine
 was entered on the Stationers' books, Oct. 4, 1617. STEEVENS.

It was printed in the same year. MALONE.

³ Perhaps John Marston. STEEVENS.

⁴ The verses first appeared in the folio, 1632. There is no
 name ascribed to them. MALONE.

To outrun hasty time ^s, retrieve the fates,
 Roll back the heavens, blow ope the iron gates
 Of death and Lethe, where confused lie
 Great heaps of ruinous mortality :
 In that deep dusky dungeon, to discern
 A royal ghost from churls ; by art to learn
 The physiognomy of shades, and give
 Them sudden birth, wond'ring how oft they live ;
 What story coldly tells, what poets feign
 At second hand, and picture without brain,
 Senseless and soul-less shews : To give a stage,—
 Ample, and true with life,—voice, action, age,
 As Plato's year, and new scene of the world,
 Them unto us, or us to them had hurl'd :
 To raise our ancient sovereigns from their herse,
 Make kings his subjects; by exchanging verse
 Enlive their pale trunks, that the present age
 Joys in their joy, and trembles at their rage :
 Yet so to temper passion, that our ears
 Take pleasure in their pain, and eyes in tears
 Both weep and smile ; fearful at plots so sad,
 Then laughing at our fear ; abus'd, and glad
 To be abus'd ; affected with that truth
 Which we perceive is false, pleas'd in that truth
 At which we start, and, by elaborate play,
 Tortur'd and tickl'd ; by a crab-like way
 Time past made pastime, and in ugly sort
 Disgorging up his ravin for our sport :—
 —While the plebeian imp, from lofty throne,
 Creates and rules a world, and works upon
 Mankind by secret engines ; now to move
 A chilling pity, then a rigorous love ;

^s To outrun hasty time,]

“ And panting time toil'd after him in vain.”

Dr. Johnson's Prologue.

STEEVENS.

To strike up and stroke down, both joy and ire;
 To steer the affections; and by heavenly fire
 Mold us anew, stoln from ourselves:—

This,—and much more, which cannot be express'd
 But by himself, his tongue, and his own breast,—
 Was Shakspeare's freehold; which his cunning brain
 Improv'd by favour of the nine-fold train;—
 The buskin'd muse, the comick queen, the grand
 And louder tone of Clio, nimble hand
 And nimbler foot of the melodious pair,
 The silver-voiced lady, the most fair
 Calliope, whose speaking silence ⁷ daunts,
 And she whose praise the heavenly body chants,
 These jointly woo'd him, envying one another;—
 Obey'd by all as spouse, but lov'd as brother;—
 And wrought a curious robe, of sable grave,
 Fresh green, and pleasant yellow, red most brave,
 And constant blue, rich purple, guiltless white,
 The lowly russet, and the scarlet bright:
 Branch'd and embroider'd like the painted spring;
 Each leaf match'd with a flower, and each string
 Of golden wire, each line of silk: there run
 Italian works, whose thread the sisters spun;
 And there did sing, or seem to sing, the choice
 Birds of a foreign note and various voice:
 Here hangs a mossy rock; there plays a fair
 But chiding fountain, purled: not the air,
 Not clouds, nor thunder, but were living drawn;
 Nor out of common tiffany or lawn,
 But fine materials, which the muses know,
 And only know the countries where they grow.

Now, when they could no longer him enjoy,
 In mortal garments pent,—death may destroy,

7 —speaking silence —]

“*Silence that spoke, and eloquence of eyes.*” *Pope's Hom.*

STEEVENS.

They say, his body : but his verse shall live,
 And more than nature takes our hand shall give :
 In a less volume, but more strongly bound,
 Shakspeare shall breathe and speak ; with laurel crown'd,
 Which never fades ; fed with ambrosian meat,
 In a well-lined vesture, rich, and neat :
 So with this robe they clothe him, bid him wear it ;
 For time shall never stain, nor envy tear it.

The friendly Admirer of his Endowments,

J. M. S.^s

A Remembrance of some English Poets. By Richard Barnefield, 1598.

And Shakspeare thou, whose honey-flowing vein,
 (Pleasing the world,) thy praises doth contain,
 Whose Venus, and whose Lucrece, sweet and chaste,
 Thy name in fame's immortal book hath plac'd,
 Live ever you, at least in fame live ever !
 Well may the body die, but fame die never.

England's Mourning Garment, &c. By Henry Chettle. 1603.

Nor doth the silver-tongued Melicert
 Drop from his honied muse one sable tear,
 To mourn her death that graced his desert,
 And to his laies open'd her royal ear.
 Shepherd, remember our Elizabeth,
 And sing her Rape, done by that Tarquin, death.

^s Probably, Jasper Mayne, *Student*. He was born in the year 1604, and became a member of Christ Church, in Oxford, in 1623, where he was soon afterwards elected a Student. In 1628 he took a bachelor's degree, and in June, 1631, that of a Master of Arts. These verses first appeared in the folio, 1632.

MALONE.

To Master W. Shakspeare.

Shakspeare, that nimble Mercury thy brain
 Lulls many-hundred Argus eyes asleep,
 So fit for all thou fashionest thy vein,
 At the horse-foot fountain thou hast drunk full deep.
 Virtue's or vice's theme to thee all one is ;
 Who loves chaste life, there's Lucrece for a teacher :
 Who list read lust, there's Venus and Adonis,
 True model of a most lascivious lecher.
 Besides, in plays thy wit winds like Meander,
 When needy new composers borrow more
 Than Terence doth from Plautus or Menander :
 But to praise thee aright, I want thy store.
 Then let thine own works thine own worth upraise,
 And help to adorn thee with deserved bays.

*Epigram 92, in an ancient collection entitled Run
 and a great Cast, 4to. by Tho. Freeman, 1614.*

Extract from Michael Drayton's "Elegy to Henry Reynolds, Esq. of Poets and Poesy."

Shakspeare, thou hadst as smooth a comick vein,
 Fitting the sock, and in thy natural brain
 As strong conception, and as clear a rage,
 As any one that traffick'd with the stage.

An Epitaph on the Admirable Dramatick Poet, W. Shakspeare 9.

What needs my Shakspeare for his honour'd bones,
 The labour of an age in piled stones ;

9 This poem is one of those prefixed to the folio edition of our author's plays, 1632, and therefore is the first of Milton's pieces

Or that his hallow'd reliques should be hid
 Under a star-ypointing pyramid ?
 Dear son of memory, great heir of fame,
 What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name ?
 Thou, in our wonder and astonishment,
 Hast built thyself a live-long monument :
 For whilst, to the shame of slow-endeavouring art,
 Thy easy numbers flow ; and that each heart
 Hath, from the leaves of thy unvalued book,
 Those Delphick lines with deep impression took ;
 Then thou, our fancy of itself bereaving ¹,
 Dost make us marble with too much conceiving ;
 And, so sepulcher'd, in such pomp dost lie,
 That kings, for such a tomb, would wish to die.

JOHN MILTON ³.

Upon Master William Shakspeare, the deceased Author.

Poets are born, not made. When I would prove
 This truth, the glad remembrance I must love
 Of never-dying Shakspeare, who alone
 Is argument enough to make that one.
 First, that he was a poet, none would doubt
 That heard the applause of what he sees set out

that was published. It appeared, however, without even the initials of his name. STEEVENS.

¹ — of ITSELF bereaving.] So the copy in Milton's Poems, printed by Mosely in 1645. That in the second folio, 1632, has —of herself bereaving. MALONE.

² These verses were written by Milton in the year 1630. Notwithstanding this just eulogium, and though the writer of it appears to have been a very diligent reader of the works of our poet, from whose rich garden he has plucked many a flower, in the true spirit of sour puritanical sanctity he censured King Charles I. for having made this "great heir of fame" the *closet companion of his solitudes*. See his *Eiconoclastes*. MALONE.

Imprinted ; where thou hast (I will not say,
 Reader, his *works*, for, to contrive a play,
 To him 'twas none,) the pattern of all wit,
 Art without art, unparallel'd as yet.
 Next Nature only help'd him, for look thorough
 This whole book³, thou shalt find he doth not borrow
 One phrase from Greeks, nor Latins imitate,
 Nor once from vulgar languages translate ;
 Nor plagiary-like from others gleane,
 Nor begs he from each witty friend a scene,
 To piece his acts with : all that he doth write
 Is pure his own ; plot, language exquisite.
 But O what praise more powerful can we give
 The dead, than that, by him, the *kings-men* live,
 His players ; which should they but have shar'd his fate,
 (All else expir'd within the short term's date,)
 How could The Globe have prosper'd, since through want
 Of change, the plays and poems had grown scant,
 But, happy verse, thou shalt be sung and heard,
 When hungry quills shall be such honour barr'd.
 Then vanish, upstart writers to each stage,
 You needy poetasters of this age !
 Where Shakspeare liv'd or spake, Vermin, forbear !
 Lest with your froth ye spot them, come not near !
 But if you needs must write, if poverty
 So pinch, that otherwise you starve and die ;
 On God's name may the Bull or Cockpit have
 Your lame blank verse, to keep you from the grave.
 Or let new Fortune's⁴ younger brethren see,
 What they can pick from your lean industry.

³ The Fortune company, I find from Sir Henry Herbert's Manuscript, removed to the Red Bull, and the Prince's company to the Fortune, in the year 1640 ; these verses therefore could not have been written so early as 1623. MALONE.

⁴ This, I believe, alludes to some of the company of The Fortune playhouse, who removed to the Red Bull. See a Pro-

I do not wonder when you offer at
 Black-friars, that you suffer: 'tis the fate
 Of richer veins; prime judgments, that have far'd
 The worse, with this deceased man compar'd.
 So have I seen, when Cæsar would appear,
 And on the stage at half-sword parley were
 Brutus and Cassius, O how the audience
 Were ravish'd! with what wonder they went thence!
 When, some new day, they would not brook a line
 Of tedious, though well-labour'd, Catiline;
 Sejanus too, was irksome: they priz'd more
 "Honest" Iago, or the jealous Moor.
 And though the Fox and subtil Alchymist,
 Long intermitted, could not quite be mist,
 Though these have sham'd all th' ancients, and might
 raise

Their author's merit with a crown of bays,
 Yet these sometimes, even at a friend's desire,
 Acted, have scarce defray'd the sea-coal fire,
 And door-keepers: when, let but Falstaff come,
 Hal, Poins, the rest,—you scarce shall have a room,
 All is so pester'd: Let but Beatrice
 And Benedick be seen, lo! in a trice
 The cock-pit, galleries, boxes, all are full,
 To hear Malvolio, that cross-garter'd gull.
 Brief, there is nothing in his wit-fraught book,
 Whose sound we would not hear, on whose worth look:
 Like old-coin'd gold, whose lines, in every page,
 Shall pass true current to succeeding age.
 But why do I dead Shakspeare's praise recite?
 Some second Shakspeare must of Shakspeare write;
 For me 'tis needless; since an host of men
 Will pay, to clap his praise, to free my pen^s.

LEON. DIGGES.

logue on the removing of the late Fortune players to The Bull.
 Tatham's Fancies Theatre, 1640. MALONE.

*An Elegy on the Death of that famous Writer and Actor
Mr. William Shakspeare.*

I dare not do thy memory that wrong,
Unto our larger griefs to give a tongue.
I'll only sigh in earnest, and let fall
My solemn tears at thy great funeral.
For every eye that rains a show'r for thee,
Laments thy loss in a sad elegy.
Nor is it fit each humble muse should have
Thy worth his subject, now thou art laid in grave.
No, it's a flight beyond the pitch of those,
Whose worthless pamphlets are not sense in prose.
Let learned Jonson sing a dirge for thee,
And fill our orb with mournful harmony :
But we need no remembrancer ; thy fame
Shall still accompany thy honour'd name
To all posterity : and make us be
Sensible of what we lost, in losing thee :
Being the age's wonder ; whose smooth rhymes
Did more reform than lash the looser times.
Nature herself did her own self admire,
As oft as thou wert pleased to attire
Her in her native lustre ; and confess,
Thy dressing was her chiefest comeliness.
How can we then forget thee, when the age
Her chiefest tutor, and the widow'd stage
Her only favorite, in thee, hath lost,
And Nature's self, what she did brag of most ?
Sleep then, rich soul of numbers ! whilst poor we
Enjoy the profits of thy legacy ;
And think it happiness enough, we have
So much of thee redeemed from the grave,

⁵ These verses are prefixed to a spurious edition of Shakspeare's poems, in small octavo, printed in 1640. MALONE.

As may suffice to enlighten future times
With the bright lustre of thy matchless rhymes ⁶.

In Memory of our famous Shakspeare.
Sacred Spirit, whiles thy lyre
Echoed o'er the Arcadian plains,
Even Apollo did admire,
Orpheus wonder'd at thy strains :
Plautus sigh'd, Sophocles wept
Tears of anger, for to hear,
After they so long had slept,
So bright a genius should appear ;
Who wrote his lines with a sun-beam,
More durable than time or fate :—
Others boldly do blaspheme,
Like those that seem to preach, but prate.
Thou wert truly priest elect,
Chosen darling to the Nine,
Such a trophy to erect
By thy wit and skill divine.
That were all their other glories
(Thine excepted) torn away,
By thy admirable stories
Their garments ever shall be gay.
Where thy honour'd bones do lie,
(As Statius once to Maro's urn,)
Thither every year will I
Slowly tread, and sadly mourn.

S. SHEPPARD ⁷.

⁶ These anonymous verses are prefixed likewise to Shakspeare's Poems, 1640. MALONE.

⁷ This author published a small volume of Epigrams in 1651, among which this poem in memory of Shakspeare is found.

MALONE.

To Shakspeare.

Thy Muse's sugred dainties seem to us
 Like the fam'd apples of old Tantalus :
 For we (admiring) see and hear thy strains,
 But none I see or hear those sweets attains ⁸.

To Mr. William Shakspeare.

Shakspeare, we must be silent in thy praise,
 'Cause our encomions will but blast thy bays,
 Which envy could not ; that thou didst do well,
 Let thine own histories prove thy chronicle ⁹.

In Remembrance of Master William Shakspeare. Ode.

I.

Beware, delighted poets, when you sing,
 To welcome nature in the early spring,
 Your numerous feet not tread
 The banks of Avon ; for each flow'r,
 As it ne'er knew a sun or show'r,
 Hangs there the pensive head.

II.

Each tree, whose thick and spreading growth hath made
 Rather a night beneath the boughs than shade,
 Unwilling now to grow,
 Looks like the plume a captain wears,
 Whose rifled *falls* are steep'd i' the tears
 Which from his last rage flow.

⁸ These verses are taken from *Two Bookes of Epigrammes and Epitaphs*, by Thomas Bancroft, Lond. 1639, 4to.

HOLT WHITE.

⁹ From *Wits Recreations, &c.* 12mo. 1640. STEEVENS.

III.

The piteous river wept itself away
 Long since, alas ! to such a swift decay,
 That reach the map, and look
 If you a river there can spy,
 And, for a river, your mock'd eye
 Will find a shallow brook.

WILLIAM D'AVENANT.

And if you leave us too, we cannot thrive,
 I'll promise neither play nor poet live
 Till ye come back : think what you do ; you see
 What audience we have : what company
 To Shakspeare comes ? whose mirth did once beguile
 Dull hours, and buskin'd, made even sorrow smile :
 So lovely were the wounds, that men would say,
 They could endure the bleeding a whole day.

SHIRLEY.

See, my lov'd Britons, see your Shakspeare rise,
 An awful ghost, confess'd to human eyes !
 Unnam'd, methinks, distinguish'd I had been
 From other shades, by this eternal green,
 About whose wreaths the vulgar poets strive,
 And with a touch their wither'd bays revive.
 Untaught, unpractis'd, in a barbarous age,
 I found not, but created first the stage :
 And if I drain'd no Greek or Latin store,
 'Twas, that my own abundance gave me more :
 On foreign trade I needed not rely,
 Like fruitful Britain rich without supply.

DRYDEN.

Shakspeare, who (taught by none) did first impart
 To Fletcher wit, to labouring Jonson art :

He, monarch-like, gave those his subjects law,
 And is that nature which they paint and draw,
 Fletcher reach'd that which on his heights did grow,
 Whilst Jonson crept and gather'd all below.
 This did his love, and this his mirth digest:
 One imitates him most, the other best.[†]
 If they have since out-writ all other men,
 'Tis with the drops that fell from Shakspeare's pen.

Ibid.

Our Shakspeare wrote too in an age as blest,
 The happiest poet of his time, and best;
 A gracious prince's favour cheer'd his muse,
 A constant favour he ne'er fear'd to lose:
 Therefore he wrote with fancy unconfin'd,
 And thoughts that were immortal as his mind.

OTWAY.

Shakspeare, whose genius to itself a law,
 Could men in every height of nature draw. ROWE.

In such an age immortal Shakspeare wrote,
 By no quaint rules nor hamp'ring criticks taught;
 With rough majestick force he mov'd the heart,
 And strength and nature made amends for art. *Ibid.*

To claim attention and the heart invade,
 Shakspeare but *wrote* the play th' Almighty *made*.
 Our neighbour's stage-art too bare-fac'd betrays,
 'Tis great Corneille at every scene we praise;
 On Nature's surer aid Britannia calls,
 Nor think of Shakspeare till the curtain falls;
 Then with a sigh returns our audience home,
 From Venice, Egypt, Persia, Greece, or Rome. YOUNG.

Shakspeare, the genius of our isle, whose mind
 (The universal mirror of mankind)
 Express'd all images, enrich'd the stage,
 But sometimes stoop'd to please a barb'rous age.
 When his immortal bays began to grow,
 Rude was the language, and the humour low.
 He, like the god of day, was always bright ;
 But rolling in its course, his orb of light
 Was sullied and obscur'd, though soaring high,
 With spots contracted from the nether sky,
 But whither is the advent'rous muse betray'd ?
 Forgive her rashness, venerable shade !
 May spring with purple flowers perfume thy urn,
 And Avon with his greens thy grave adorn !
 Be all thy faults, whatever faults there be,
 Imputed to the times, and not to thee !

Some scions shot from this immortal root,
 Their tops much lower, and less fair the fruit.
 Jonson the tribute of my verse might claim,
 Had he not strove to blemish Shakspeare's name.
 But like the radiant twins that gild the sphere,
 Fletcher and Beaumont next in pomp appear.

FENTON.

————— For lofty sense,
 Creative fancy, and inspection keen
 Through the deep windings of the human heart,
 Is not wild Shakspeare thine and nature's boast ?

THOMSON.

Pride of his own, and wonder of this age,
 Who first created, and yet rules the stage,
 Bold to design, all-powerful to express,
 Shakspeare each passion drew in every dress :
 Great above rule, and imitating none ;
 Rich without borrowing, Nature was his own.

MALLETT.

Shakspeare (whom you and every playhouse bill
 Style the divine, the matchless, what you will,)
 For gain, not glory, wing'd his roving flight,
 And grew immortal in his own despight. POPE.

An Inscription for a Monument of Shakspeare.

O youths and virgins: O declining eld:
 O pale misfortune's slaves: O ye who dwell
 Unknown, with humble quiet; ye who wait
 In courts, or fill the golden seat of kings:
 O sons of sport and pleasure: O thou wretch
 That weep'st for jealous love, or the sore wounds
 Of conscious guilt, or death's rapacious hand,
 Which left thee void of hope: O ye who roam
 In exile; ye who through the embattled field
 Seek bright renown; or who for nobler palms
 Contend, the leaders of a publick cause;
 Approach: behold this marble. Know ye not
 The features? Hath not oft his faithful tongue
 Told you the fashion of your own estate,
 'The secrets of your bosom? Here then, round
 His monument with reverence while ye stand,
 Say to each other: "This was Shakspeare's form;
 "Who walk'd in every path of human life,
 "Felt every passion; and to all mankind
 "Doth now, will ever, that experience yield
 "Which his own genius only could acquire."

AKENSIDE.

————— when lightning fires
 The arch of heaven, and thunders rock the ground,
 When furious whirlwinds rend the howling air,
 And ocean, groaning from his lowest bed,
 Heaves his tempestuous billows to the sky;

Amid the mighty uproar, while below
The nations tremble, Shakspeare looks abroad
From some high cliff superior, and enjoys
The elemental war.

Ibid.

From the Remonstrance of Shakspeare,

*Supposed to have been spoken at the Theatre-Royal, when
the French Comedians were acting by subscription.*

What though the footsteps of my devious muse
The measured walks of Grecian art refuse?
Or though the frankness of my hardy style
Mock the nice touches of the critick's file?
Yet what my age and climate held to view
Impartial I survey'd, and fearless drew.
And say, ye skilful in the human heart,
Who know to prize a poet's noblest part,
What age, what clime, could e'er an ampler field
For lofty thought, for daring fancy yield?
I saw this England break the shameful bands
Forg'd for the souls of men by sacred hands;
I saw each groaning realm her aid implore;
Her sons the heroes of each warlike shore;
Her naval standard, (the dire Spaniard's bane,)
Obey'd through all the circuit of the main.
Then too great commerce, for a late-found world,
Around your coast her eager sails unfurl'd:
New hopes new passions thence the bosom fir'd;
New plans, new arts, the genius thence inspir'd;
Thence every scene which private fortune knows,
In stronger life, with bolder spirit, rose.

Disgrac'd I this full prospect which I drew?
My colours languid, or my strokes untrue?
Have not your sages, warriors, swains, and kings,
Confess'd the living draught of men and things?

What other bard in any clime appears,
 Alike the master of your smiles and tears ?
 Yet have I deign'd your audience to entice
 With wretched bribes to luxury and vice ?
 Or have my various scenes a purpose known,
 Which freedom, virtue, glory, might not own ? *Ibid.*

When learning's triumph o'er her barb'rous foes
 First rear'd the stage, immortal Shakspeare rose ;
 Each change of many-colour'd life he drew,
 Exhausted worlds, and then imagin'd new :
 Existence saw him spurn her bounded reign,
 And panting Time toil'd after him in vain :
 His pow'rful strokes presiding truth impress'd,
 And unresisted passion storm'd the breast. JOHNSON.

Upon Shakspeare's Monument at Stratford-upon-Avon.

Great Homer's birth seven rival cities claim ;
 Too mighty such monopoly of fame.
 Yet not to birth alone did Homer owe
 His wond'rous worth ; what Egypt could bestow,
 With all the schools of Greece and Asia join'd,
 Enlarg'd the immense expansion of his mind :
 Nor yet unrival'd the Mæonian strain ;
 The British Eagle¹ and the Mantuan Swan
 Tow'r equal heights. But, happier Stratford, thou
 With uncontested laurels deck thy brow ;
 Thy bard was thine *unschool'd*, and from thee brought
 More than all Egypt, Greece, or Asia taught ;
 Not Homer's self such matchless laurels won ;
 The Greek has rivals, but thy Shakspeare none.

T. SEWARD.

¹ Milton.

*From Epistle to Sir Thomas Hanmer on his Edition of
Shakspeare's Works.*

Hard was the lot those injur'd strains endure'd,
Unown'd by science, and by years obscur'd :
Fair fancy wept ; and echoing sighs confess'd
A fixt despair in every tuneful breast.
Not with more grief the afflicted swains appear,
When wintry winds deform the plenteous year ;
When lingering frosts the ruin'd seats invade
Where Peace resorted, and the Graces play'd.

Each rising art, by just gradation moves,
Toil builds on toil, and age on age improves :
The muse alone unequal dealt her rage,
And grac'd with noblest pomp her earliest stage.
Preserv'd through time, the speaking scenes impart
Each changeful wish of Phædra's tortur'd heart ;
Or paint the curse, that mark'd the Theban's ² reign,
A bed incestuous, and a father slain.
With kind concern our pitying eyes o'erflow,
Trace the sad tale, and own another's woe.

To Rome remov'd, with wit secure to please,
The comick sisters kept their native ease.
With jealous fear declining Greece beheld
Her own Menander's art almost excell'd .
But every Muse essay'd to raise in vain
Some labour'd rival of her tragick strain ;
Illyssus' laurels, though transferr'd with toil,
Droop'd their fair leaves, nor knew th' unfriendly soil.

As arts expir'd, resistless Dulness rose ;
Goths, priests, or Vandals,—all were learning's foes.
Till Julius ³ first recall'd each exil'd maid,
And Cosmo own'd them in the Etrurian shade :

² The Œdipus of Sophocles.

³ Julius II. the immediate predecessor of Leo X.

Then deeply skill'd in love's engaging theme,
 The soft Provencial pass'd to Arno's stream :
 With graceful ease the wanton lyre he strung ;
 Sweet flow'd the lays,—but love was all he sung.
 The gay description could not fail to move ;
 For, led by nature, all are friends to love.

But heaven, still various in its works, decreed
 The perfect boast of time should last succeed.
 The beauteous union must appear at length,
 Of Tuscan fancy, and Athenian strength :
 One greater Muse Eliza's reign adorn,
 And even a Shakspeare to her fame be born.

Yet ah ! so bright her morning's opening ray,
 In vain our Britain hop'd an equal day.
 No second growth the western isle could bear,
 At once exhausted with too rich a year.
 Too nicely Jonson knew the critick's part ;
 Nature in him was almost lost in art.
 Of softer mould the gentle Fletcher came,
 The next in order, as the next in name.
 With pleas'd attention 'midst his scenes we find
 Each glowing thought, that warms the female mind ;
 Each melting sigh, and every tender tear,
 The lover's wishes, and the virgin's fear.
 His every strain the Smiles and Graces own⁴ ;
 But stronger Shakspeare felt for man alone⁵ :

⁴ Their characters are thus distinguished by Mr. Dryden.

⁵ There cannot be a stronger proof that, even up to a late period, the powers of Shakspeare were imperfectly understood, than that such a man as Collins should have delivered this opinion. No poet has ever surpassed, perhaps no one has equalled, the various, and even nicely discriminative excellence with which Shakspeare has delineated the female character. Nothing more is necessary to show this, than a short list of names, to which many might be added : Lady Macbeth, Volumnia, and Cleopatra ; Lady Constance, and Queen Catharine ; Ophelia, Desdemona, Juliet, and Imogen ; Beatrice, and Rosalind. BOSWELL.

Drawn by his pen, our ruder passions stand
Th' unrivall'd picture of his early hand.

With gradual steps ⁶, and slow, exacter France
Saw Art's fair empire o'er her shores advance :
By length of toil a bright perfection knew,
Correctly bold, and just in all she drew :
Till late Corneille, with Lucan's ⁷ spirit fir'd,
Breath'd the free strain, as Rome and He inspir'd ;
And classick judgment gain'd to sweet Racine
The temperate strength of Maro's chaster line.

But wilder far the British laurel spread,
And wreaths less artful crown our poet's head.
Yet He alone to every scene could give
The historian's truth, and bid the manners live.
Wak'd at his call I view, with glad surprize,
Majestick forms of mighty monarchs rise.
There Henry's trumpets spread their loud alarms,
And laurell'd Conquest waits her hero's arms.
Here gentler Edward claims a pitying sigh,
Scarce born to honours, and so soon to die !
Yet shall thy throne, unhappy infant, bring
No beam of comfort to the guilty king :
The time shall come ⁸, when Gloster's heart shall bleed
In life's last hours, with horror of the deed :
When dreary visions shall at last present
Thy vengeful image in the midnight tent :
Thy hand unseen the secret death shall bear,
Blunt the weak sword, and break the oppressive spear.

⁶ About the time of Shakspeare, the poet Hardy was in great repute in France. He wrote, according to Fontenelle, six hundred plays. The French poets after him applied themselves in general to the correct improvement of the stage, which was almost totally disregarded by those of our own country, Jonson excepted.

⁷ The favourite author of the elder Corneille.

⁸ Turno tempus erit, magno cùm optaverit emptum
Intactum Pallanta, &c.

Where'er we turn, by fancy charm'd, we find
 Some sweet illusion of the cheated mind.
 Oft, wild of wing, she calls the soul to rove
 With humbler nature, in the rural grove ;
 Where swains contented own the quiet scene,
 And twilight fairies tread the circled green :
 Dress'd by her hand, the woods and valleys smile,
 And Spring diffusive decks the enchanted isle.

O more than all in powerful genius blest,
 Come, take thine empire o'er the willing breast !
 Whate'er the wounds this youthful heart shall feel,
 Thy songs support me, and thy morals heal.
 There every thought the poet's warmth may raise,
 There native musick dwells in all the lays.
 O might some verse with happiest skill persuade
 Expressive Picture to adopt thine aid !
 What wondrous draughts might rise from every page !
 What other Raphaels charm a distant age !

Methinks even now I view some free design,
 Where breathing Nature lives in every line :
 Chaste and subdued the modest lights decay,
 Steal into shades, and mildly melt away.
 —And see, where Antony ⁹, in tears approv'd,
 Guards the pale relicts of the chief he lov'd :
 O'er the cold corse the warrior seems to bend,
 Deep sunk in grief, and mourns his murder'd friend !
 Still as they press, he calls on all around,
 Lifts the torn robe, and points the bleeding wound.

But who is he ¹, whose brows exalted bear
 A wrath impatient, and a fiercer air ?
 Awake to all that injur'd worth can feel,
 On his own Rome he turns the avenging steel.
 Yet shall not war's insatiate fury fall
 (So heaven ordains it) on the destin'd wall.

⁹ See the tragedy of Julius Cæsar.

¹ Coriolanus. See Mr. Spence's dialogue on the Odyssey.

See the fond mother, 'midst the plaintive train,
Hung on his knees, and prostrate on the plain!
Touch'd to the soul, in vain he strives to hide
The son's affection in the Roman's pride;
O'er all the man conflicting passions rise,
Rage grasps the sword, while Pity melts the eyes.

COLLINS.

Methinks I see with Fancy's magick eye,
The shade of Shakspeare, in yon azure sky.
On yon high cloud behold the bard advance,
Piercing all nature with a single glance:
In various attitudes around him stand
The Passions, waiting for his dread command.
First kneeling Love before his feet appears,
And musically sighing melts in tears.
Near him fell Jealousy with fury burns,
And into storms the amorous breathings turns;
Then Hope with heavenward look, and Joy draws near,
While palsied Terror trembles in the rear.
Such Shakspeare's train of horror, and delight, &c.

SMART.

What are the lays of artful Addison,
Coldly correct, to Shakspeare's warblings wild?
Whom on the winding Avon's willow'd banks
Fair Fancy found, and bore the smiling babe
To a close cavern: (still the shepherds shew
The sacred place, whence with religious awe
They hear, returning from the field at eve,
Strange whisp'ring of sweet musick through the air:)
Here, as with honey gather'd from the rock,
She fed the little prattler, and with songs
Oft sooth'd his wond'ring ears; with deep delight
On her soft lap he sat, and caught the sounds.

JOSEPH WARTON.

Here, boldly mark'd with every living hue,
Nature's unbounded portrait Shakspeare drew :
But chief, the dreadful group of human woes
The daring artist's tragick pencil chose ;
Explor'd the pangs that rend the royal breast,
Those wounds that lurk beneath the tissued vest.

THOMAS WARTON.

Monody, written near Stratford-upon-Avon.

Avon, thy rural views, thy pastures wild,
The willows that o'erhang thy twilight edge,
Their boughs entangling with the embattled sedge ;
Thy brink with watery foliage quaintly fring'd,
Thy surface with reflected verdure ting'd ;
Sooth me with many a pensive pleasure mild.
But while I muse, that here the Bard Divine
Whose sacred dust yon high-arch'd isles inclose,
Where the tall windows rise in stately rows,
Above th' embowering shade,
Here first, at Fancy's fairy-circled shrine,
Of daisies pied his infant offering made ;
Here playful yet, in stripling years unripe,
Fram'd of thy reeds a shrill and artless pipe :
Sudden thy beauties, Avon, all are fled,
As at the waving of some magick wand ;
An holy trance my charmed spirit wings,
And awful shapes of leaders and of kings,
People the busy mead,
Like spectres swarming to the wisard's hall ;
And slowly pace, and point with trembling hand
The wounds ill-cover'd by the purple pall.
Before me Pity seems to stand,
A weeping mourner, smote with anguish sore

To see Misfortune rend in frantick mood
 His robe, with regal woes embroider'd o'er.
 Pale Terror leads the visionary band,
 And sternly shakes his sceptre, dropping blood. *Ibid.*

Far from the sun and summer gale,
 In thy green lap was Nature's darling laid,
 What time, where lucid Avon stray'd,
 To him the mighty mother did unveil
 Her awful face: The dauntless child
 Stretch'd forth his little arms, and smil'd.
 This pencil take (she said) whose colours clear
 Richly paint the vernal year:
 Thine too these golden keys, immortal boy!
 This can unlock the gates of joy;
 Of horror that, and thrilling fears,
 Or ope the sacred source of sympathetick tears². GRAY.

² An ingenious person, who sent Mr. Gray his remarks anonymously on this and the following Ode soon after they were published, gives this stanza and the following a very just and well-expressed eulogy: "A poet is perhaps never more conciliating than when he praises favorite predecessors in his art. Milton is not more the pride than Shakspeare the love of their country: It is therefore equally judicious to diffuse a tenderness and a grace through the praise of Shakspeare, as to extol in a strain more elevated and sonorous the boundless soarings of Milton's imagination." The critick has here well noted the beauty of contrast which results from the two descriptions; yet it is further to be observed, to the honour of our poet's judgment, that the tenderness and grace in the former, does not prevent it from strongly characterising the three capital perfections of Shakspeare's genius; and when he describes his power of exciting terror (a species of the sublime) he ceases to be diffuse, and becomes as he ought to be, concise and energetical. MASON.

Next Shakspeare sat, irregularly great,
 And in his hand a magick rod did hold,
 Which visionary beings did create,
 And turn the foulest dross to purest gold :
 Whatever spirits rove in earth or air,
 Or bad or good, obey his dread command ;
 To his behests these willingly repair,
 Those aw'd by terrors of his magick wand,
 The which not all their powers united might withstand.
 LLOYD.

Oh, where's the bard, who at one view
 Could look the whole creation through,
 Who travers'd all the human heart,
 Without recourse to Grecian art ?
 He scorn'd the rules of imitation,
 Of altering, pilfering, and translation,
 Nor painted horror, grief, or rage,
 From models of a former age :
 The bright original he took,
 And tore the leaf from nature's book.
 'Tis Shakspeare.—

Ibid.

In the first seat, in robe of various dies,
 A noble wildness flashing from his eyes,
 Sat Shakspeare.—In one hand a wand he bore,
 For mighty wonders fam'd in days of yore ;
 The other held a globe, which to his will
 Obedient turn'd, and own'd a master's skill :
 Things of the noblest kind his genius drew,
 And look'd through nature at a single view³ :

³ Thus Pope, in his Temple of Fame, speaking of Aristotle :

“ His piercing eyes erect appear to view

“ Superior worlds, and *look all Nature through*.”

STEEVENS.

A loose he gave to his unbounded soul,
 And taught new lands to rise, new seas to roll;
 Call'd into being scenes unknown before,
 And, passing nature's bounds, was something more.

CHURCHILL.

Yes! jealous wits may still for empire strive
 Still keep the flames of critick rage alive:
 Our Shakspeare yet shall all his rights maintain,
 And crown the triumphs of Eliza's reign.
 Above controul, above each classick rule
 His tutress nature, and the world his school.
 On daring pinions borne, to him was given
 Th' aerial range of Fancy's brightest Heaven,
 To bid rapt thought o'er noblest heights aspire,
 And wake each passion with a *muse of fire*.—
 Revere his genius—To the dead be just,
 And spare the laurels, that o'ershade the dust.—
 Low sleeps the bard, *in cold obstruction laid*,
 Nor asks the chaplet from a rival's head.
 O'er the drear vault, Ambition's utmost bound,
 Unheard shall Fame her airy trumpet sound!
 Unheard alike, nor grief, nor transport raise,
 Thy blast of censure, or thy note of praise!
 As Raphael's own creation grac'd his hearse⁴,
 And sham'd the pomp of ostentatious verse.
 Shall Shakspeare's honours by himself be paid,
 And nature perish ere his pictures fade.

KEATE TO VOLTAIRE, 1768.

⁴ The Transfiguration, that well known picture of Raphael, was carried before his body to the grave, doing more real honour to his memory than either his epitaph in the Pantheon, the famous distich of Cardinal Bembo, or all the other adulatory verses written on the same occasion. KEATE.

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ON THE
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WHEN at the commencement of the eighteenth century, an edition of Shakspeare was undertaken by Mr. Rowe, the gradual changes to which every language is subject, had made such important alterations in the English, which has long been remarked to be more variable than, perhaps, any other; that many modes of speech which were common in the reign of Elizabeth, had become almost wholly unknown. It is not to be denied, that some of the most distinguished antiquaries, which this country can boast of, were existing at that period; but they seem, in a great measure, to have formed a caste by themselves, and to have had little influence upon the general literature of their contemporaries. Rowe, as Johnson has observed, appears to have executed his task without much attempt at critical nicety, and thus, at least, was prevented from doing so much mischief as his immediate successor, as an editor, Mr. Pope. So far from being possessed of those qualifications, which ought particularly to belong to the person who undertakes to exhibit correctly the text of an ancient writer, among which are an intimate acquaintance

with the language and customs of his age, Mr. Pope appears, in common with his friend Dean Swift, to have regarded that species of knowledge with the most profound contempt. It is much to be lamented that this great poet, whose exquisite taste enabled him to cull flowers even from the barren desert of Flatman or Elkanah Settle *, and who, it is said, in the latter period of his life, when shown Hall's Satires, regretted that he had not seen them sooner, had not been led to such a treasury of beautiful thoughts and expressions as the writers of Elizabeth's age would have furnished. But even his deficiency in this respect has tended to promote the cultivation of that species of literature which he decried; for what could point out its advantages in a stronger point of view, than to see the first genius of his age engaged in an unequal conflict with Theobald? Poor Theobald has scarcely had justice done to him. The researches of men superior both in talent and acquirements, have, indeed, thrown his labours into the shade; but he had the merit of being the first who pointed out the path which has since been more successfully followed, and for years afterwards was the only editor who made even an approach to a faithful representation of the works of Shakspeare. Dr. Johnson, whose unceasing curiosity, in despite of his natural indolence,

* His imitation of Flatman, in "A Dying Christian to his Soul," has been often pointed out; but the passage in Settle, which, I conjecture, he had in view, may not be so generally known. In the *Empress of Morroco*, which he is likely to have read from curiosity, as the object of Dryden's hostility, the empress accuses Muly Hamet of an attempt to ravish her—

"Then, Muly Hamet, then thy cruel breast—

"MULY HAMET. Speak!

"EMPRESS. *Let my tears and blushes speak the rest.*"

I need not remind the reader of the corresponding line in *Eloisa*, nor how Pope, by one admirable epithet *burning* blushes, has made it his own.

had led him to the perusal of a greater variety of books than almost any other man; and who, while compiling materials for his Dictionary, was naturally induced to review the modes of speech which prevailed at different periods, might have been supposed peculiarly fitted for the superintendence of an edition of Shakspeare. But it should be recollected that the main object of his immortal work, was not an archæological inquiry into the state of our language as it anciently stood, but to ascertain in what its purity then consisted, that it might be fixed on a stable basis. But however imperfectly he may have understood our old English writers, he was *unoculus inter cæcos*; he shared that deficiency with others, even among those who had devoted themselves to antiquarian pursuits, as will be shown hereafter, in the instance of Warton himself, in his Observations on the Fairy Queen. But a new era in our literature was about to commence; and men whose taste would have thrown a grace around any subject which they chose to discuss—Percy, Warton in his History of Poetry, and Tyrwhitt, undertook, in their different departments, to rescue the genius of our forefathers from the neglect to which it had been nearly consigned. The excellence of Tyrwhitt's Chaucer has been universally acknowledged, and the correctness of his views on one important point, will be the subject of discussion, when we come to consider the history of our early metre. Dr. Percy has been arraigned for his want of fidelity in the publication of his Reliques; but when it is recollected that the publick taste required to be formed, and that it would have been difficult to have procured readers at that time for the simple compositions which he recommended to our notice, if they had appeared in all their native rudeness, it will probably be found that those stern antiquaries, who objected to the plan which he pursued, would in vain

have called our attention to their own unadorned collections, if his elegance had not given popularity to the ancient ballad and romance; and even they themselves might never have turned their attention to the subject, had they not been allured by the pleasing garb in which it had been arrayed by that fascinating writer. To Warton still greater injustice has been done. In his *History of Poetry* he had no model to follow, no predecessor to guide him. Instead of invidiously remarking that his dates are sometimes inaccurate, or his arrangement desultory, we should remember that he had a wilderness to bring into cultivation, and should speak with gratitude of one who has not only opened a new path to us, but has strewn it with flowers. Had Ritson, his most bitter antagonist, undertaken such a work; if we may judge from his *Bibliographia Poetica*, written under circumstances infinitely more favourable than those in which Warton was placed, his errors would have been, at least, equally numerous; while that, which is now as entertaining as a fairy tale, would have been rendered as dull as a parish register. The admirable *Essay on the Learning of Shakspeare*, by Dr. Farmer, gave an additional stimulus to studies of this nature, and explained much more clearly, than had ever been done before, the course which those who wished to illustrate our great poet ought to pursue; and the library of which he should seek to be possessed, was in some measure pointed out by the laborious Capell. Among those who embarked in this new pursuit, with the greatest ardour, and with talents proportioned to his zeal, was Mr. Steevens. Whatever was wanting in his first endeavours to elucidate Shakspeare, his continued and well-directed researches promised to supply, and a hope might reasonably have been entertained that those immortal works which had suffered every injury that could have been inflicted upon them by critical

temerity, would be restored by him to their pristine purity, as far as the unavoidable ravages of time would permit. But a new critick made his appearance; and Mr. Malone, with an industry which no labour was sufficient to check, assisted by a remarkable share of natural acumen, proceeded to tread, with unexampled success, in the road which his immediate predecessor had so ably set before him. From this moment the whole system of Mr. Steevens was changed. That faithful adherence to the old copies, which he had represented as the principal recommendation of his former labours, was at once laid aside; and those unauthorised sophistications of the text, which in his first Advertisement he informed us he had left to some more daring commentator, were, without scruple, introduced into his new edition in 1793, and still more unsparingly adopted in that which was posthumously published by Mr. Reed. He no longer submitted to the laborious process of explaining the obsolete phraseology of Shakspeare, by a comparison with the writers of his own age, but cut the knot in a summary manner by discarding every mode of expression which presented any difficulty, as the corruption of an ignorant editor, or a blunder of the press; while, at the same time, the poet's versification was clipped or lengthened as caprice might suggest, in order to make it perfectly consonant to our modern notions of metrical harmony. To show that all this was altogether unjustifiable, and that the language and modulation of Shakspeare were such as would have been considered as unexceptionable in the age of Elizabeth, though deviating in many instances from the rules by which we are directed in the reign of George the Third or Fourth, is the object of the following discussion.

I. OF SHAKSPEARE'S PHRASEOLOGY.

In examining the language of an ancient writer, many considerations ought to be taken into our view. Words which were then generally used, may since have been dismissed from the language altogether, or have dropped out of common speech, and are only now to be met with in some provincial dialect. Others may still remain, but have gradually acquired a totally different signification from that which they formerly bore : while others again, such as neuter verbs converted into active, substantives into adjectives, have had their meaning so modified, that the sense which they convey now, may vary considerably from that which was affixed to them at a more early period ; but the largest class of discrepancies between the style of a writer of the present day, and the productions which appeared two centuries ago, will fall under the head of grammatical construction.

The first of these divisions of the subject presents no great difficulty. The obsolete words in Shakspeare may be regarded as comparatively few, when we advert to the changes which the language was undergoing, even at the time when he wrote, the fluctuations to which it had been subject for a century before, and from which it will probably never be altogether free, as long as “ englyshe men, ben borne vnder the domynacyon of the mone.” The difficulties which beset a writer, who endeavoured, in the reign of Henry VII., to adopt his style to the fleeting fashion of the day, are detailed with ludicrous simplicity by Caxton, in the Preface to his Translation of Virgil.

“ And whan I had aduysed me in this sayd booke. I delybered and concluded to translate it in to englyshe. And forthwyth toke a penne and ynke and

wrote a leef or tweyne, whyche I ouersawe agayn to corecte it, And whan I sawe the fayr & straunge termes therein, I doubted that it sholde not please some gentylmen whiche late blamed me sayeng that in my translacyons I had ouer curyos termes whiche coude not be vnderstande of comyn peple, and desired me to vse olde and homely termes in my translacyons. and fayn wolde I satysfye euery man, and so to doo toke an olde boke and redde therein, and certaynly the englyshe was so rude and brood that I coude not wele vnderstande it. And also my lorde Abbot of Westmynster ded do shewe to me late certayn euydences wryton in olde englyshe for to reduce it in to our englyshe now vsid, And certaynly it was wryton in suche wyse that it was more lyke to dutche than englyshe. I coude not reduce ne brynge it to be vnderstonden, And certaynly our langage now vsed varyeth ferre from that whiche was vsed and spoken whan I was borne, For we englyshe men, ben borne vnder the domynacyon of the mone. whiche is neuer stedfaste, but euer wauerynge, wexynge one season, and waneth & dyscreaseth another season, And that comyn englyshe that is spoken in one shyre varyeth from another. In so moche that in my dayes happened that certayn marchants were in a ship in Tamyse for to haue sayled ouer the see into Zelande, and for lacke of wynde thei taryed atte forlond. and wente to lande for to refreshe them And one of theym named Sheffelde a mercer cam in to an hows and axed for mete. and specyally he axyd after eggys And the goode wyf answerde. that she coude speke no frenshe. And the merchant was angry. for he also coude speke no frenshe. but wolde haue hadde egges, and she vnderstode hym not, And thenne at laste another sayd that he wolde haue eyren, then the good wyf sayd that she vnderstod hym wel, Loo what sholde a man in thyse dayes now wryte. egges or eyren, certaynly it is harde to playse every man, by cause of dyuersite & change

of langage. For in these dayes euery man that is in ony reputacyon in his contre. wyll vtter his comynycacyon and maters in suche maners & termes, that fewe men shall vnderstonde theym, And som honest and grete clerkes have ben wyth me and desired me to wryte the moste curyous termes that I coude fynde, And thus bytwene playn rude, & curyous I stande abashed. but in my Judgemente, the comyn termes that be dayli vsed ben lyghter to be vnderstonde than the olde and ancyent englyshe," &c.

The influx of classical literature into this country, during the two succeeding reigns, was attended with the introduction of fresh novelties by those who were ambitious of displaying their new acquirements; and the fondness for travelling, which prevailed during the reign of Elizabeth, occasioned the perpetual importation of exotick phraseology, from our continental neighbours. Hence our language became subject to corruptions of various kinds, against which the most sensible of our ancient criticks were accustomed to inveigh.

"Among al other lessons," says Wilson, "this should first be learned, y^t we neuer affect any strañge ynkehorne termes, but so speake as is commonly receiued: neither sekyng to be ouer fine, nor yet liuyng ouer carelesse, vsyng our speache as most men do, & ordryng our wittes, as the fewest haue doen. Some seke so farre for outlādishe Englishe, that thei forget altogether their mothers lāguage. And I dare swere this, if some of their mothers were aliue, thei were not able to tell, what thei say, & yet these fine Englishe clerkes, wil saie thei speake in their mother tongue, if a mā should charge thē for cōuterfeityng the kynges English. Some farre iorneid ientlemē at their returne home, like as thei loue to go in forrein apparell, so thei wil powder their talke w^t ouersea lāguage. He that cometh lately out of France, wil talke Frēche English, & neuer blushe at the matter. Another

choppes in with Angleso Italiano: the lawyer wil store his stomack with the pratyng of Pedlers. The Auditour in makyng his accompt and rekenyng, cometh in with sise sould, and cater denere, for vis. iiij*d*. The fine Courtier wil talke nothyng but Chaucer. The misticall wise menne, and Poeticall Clerkes, will speake nothyng but quaint prouerbes, and blynd allegories, delityng muche in their awne darkenesse, especially, when none can tell what thei dooe saie. The vnlearned or foolishe phantasticall, that smelles but of learnyng (suche felowes as haue seen learned men in their daies) will so latine their tongues, that the simple cannot but wonder at their talke, and thynke surely thei speake by some Reuelacion. I knowe them that thynke Rhetorique, to stande wholly vpon darke woordes, and he that can catche an ynke horne terme by the taile, hym thei compt to bee a fine Englishe man, and a good Rhetorician." *Wilson's Arte of Rhetorique*, 1553.

But from this pedantry and affectation Shakspeare was remarkably free, and has more than once made them the subject of satire in his plays. His good sense and good taste were aided in this instance by the nature of his vocation: a dramatick author, who addresses a popular audience, must speak so as to be clearly and readily understood; and his object would be defeated, whether he wished to excite sympathy or mirth, if his hearers, instead of going along with him, were obliged to pause, in order that they might unravel his meaning. In this respect, if Shakspeare be compared with Spenser, the difference will, I think, be apparent. Mr. Malone was of opinion that the character given of Spenser's language, as being formed upon an antique model, referred to his Pastorals alone; and that his *Fairy Queen*, in point of expression, exhibited no greater marks of antiquity, than the compositions of his contemporaries in general. That the Pastorals contain archaisms in a much greater

abundance than the rest of his works, is perfectly evident ; yet I cannot but think that his great poem, not only in the terms which he employs, but in the structure of his phraseology, is designed to carry us back to the recollection of a former age ; and that in his exquisite picture of the chivalrous spirit, and simplicity, of the olden time, they were meant, in some measure, to be arrayed in the costume which originally belonged to them. If we were to read a scene in one of Shakspeare's plays, and a canto of the *Fairy Queen*, to an unpractised auditor, we should find, I apprehend, by this experiment, that the dramattick author would be understood with much greater facility. Yet in the lapse of more than two centuries, it could not but happen that the constant introduction of new terms would displace some of their predecessors. In the older Dictionaries, such as those by Bullokar and Cockeram, we find, among their list of hard words, many which are now in such familiar use, that the most ignorant, even in the lowest class of society, would easily comprehend their meaning. Without any reference to its Greek derivation, a child understands your question, if you ask him whether he has learned his alphabet ; but would probably require an explanation if you made the same inquiry as to his *cross row*. Shakspeare has thus, from necessity, been sometimes placed in the same situation with his contemporaries ; and expressions are to be found in his writings, of which the import can only be ascertained by antiquarian research. The rage of emendation, and the wish to reduce every thing to a modern standard, which Mr. Steevens at one time so successfully opposed, and which he afterwards sanctioned by his example, have spared these old words, the venerable reliques of our ancestors, while they have been mercilessly engaged in expelling antiquated phraseology, or, as Mr. Steevens terms them, the "grannams" of the press. Their defence is not, therefore, called for in this

discussion, which is mainly intended to show the propriety of preserving the integrity of the original text. They have, for the most part, been fully and satisfactorily explained by contemporary usage: but in some few instances, where no such authority could be found, they have been supposed, upon what I cannot but think very hasty grounds, to have been, in all probability, the coinage of our poet himself. If, as Mr. Malone has observed, we were in possession of every pamphlet which was published in the reign of Elizabeth, and had attentively read them all, a price which I apprehend few would be willing to pay for the privilege of pronouncing a decided opinion upon this subject, we might then feel ourselves, in some degree, justified in asserting, that a particular word existed nowhere else than in the pages of Shakspeare. Yet even then we could come to no certain conclusion. Many expressions, of which the correctness is fully allowed, have, perhaps, never found their way into any written composition. In one instance Shakspeare, as it has been conjectured, did not invent a new word, but employed it in a sense very different from that ascribed to it by all his contemporaries. "Thewes, (says Mr. Steevens, after having stated it to have meant, in two passages of Shakspeare, muscular strength,) is perhaps applied by Shakspeare alone, to the perfections of the body; in all other writers of the time, it implies manners and behaviour." Yet the following quotation from Gascoigne, in his "Certayne Notes of Instruction concerning the making of Verse or Ryme in English," seems to prove that Shakspeare used it with its strict and original signification, and that it was, in the others, a metaphor, the old critick thinks rather a daring one. "This poetickall licence is a shrewde fellow, and couereth many faults in a verse, it maketh wordes longer, shorter, of mo sillables, of fewer, newer, older, truer, falser, and to conclud it turneth all things at pleasure, for example, ydone for done, adoune for

downe, orecome for overcome, tane for taken, power for powre, heaven for heavn, *thewes for good parts or good qualities*," &c.

But the modern reader of Shakspeare, who is unacquainted with ancient phraseology, and unaided by explanatory comments, would find himself much less puzzled with words which he has never met with before, than with those which he might suppose familiarly known to him, and yet is unable to discover the meaning which they are intended to convey. In the first case he would at once be conscious of his ignorance, and would seek for information elsewhere; but in the second he would think he was perfectly competent to interpret for himself, and if he failed, would be apt to suspect corruption in the text. *To fear*, used for *to create fear*; *to censure*, meaning to express an opinion either favourable, or otherwise; perpetually occur in the pages of Shakspeare and his contemporaries, and indeed for a long period after. *Resentment*, at the present day, always implies *anger*; in former times it meant as frequently *kindness* or *affection*, or strong feeling of any kind. Archbishop Sancroft, in one of his letters, says, "I *resented*, as I ought, the news of my mother-in-law's death." *Fond* would appear to us to be a singular epithet when applied to a preceptor, who, as Johnson said of his old master Hunter, was wrong-headedly severe; but Ascham, when remonstrating against the *folly* of using harsh modes of education, introduces Sir Richard Sackville as lamenting that a *fond* scholemaster drave him from the love of learning by the fear of beating. *Depraved* is used, by Jewel, for an innocent person falsely accused; and the list of words, bearing formerly a signification not affixed to them now, might easily be made more ample than the space, which could, with propriety or advantage, be allotted to it, on the present occasion, would allow. In Shakspeare, and other writers of his time, we fre-

quently find substantives formed from verbs, and verbs from substantives, and other deviations from the usage of the present day. Dr. Johnson, in his Preface, remarks, "I have seen in the book of some modern critick, a collection of anomalies, which shew that he has corrupted language by every mode of depravation, but which his admirer has accumulated as a monument of honour." The critick here meant was, I believe, Dr. Hurd, in a note upon Horace's Art of Poetry; but, in truth, there was probably little foundation either for Hurd's applause or Johnson's censure. A considerable number of the instances which, in the note alluded to, are produced for the purpose of exhibiting the callida junctura of Shakspeare, are found in other writers of that age; and it is likely that the rest might also be traced to his contemporaries by a more diligent or fortunate search. Shakspeare's use of adjectives, adverbially, such as *damnable ungrateful*, for *damnably ungrateful*, sounds harshly to our ears; but such was certainly the language of his time. One instance, perhaps, will suffice, in addition to those which Mr. Malone has mentioned in a note on All's Well that Ends Well, vol. x. p. 438, which I have found in Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia, p. 151, edit. 1613: "Now so *evill* could she conceale her fire, and so wilfullie persevered she in it." Mr. Malone has remarked the same inaccuracy in Dryden, in his Address to the Reader before his Essay on Dramatick Poesy: "This I intimate, lest any should think me so *exceeding* vain, as to teach others an art which they understand much better than myself;" and Lowth has detected it in the writers of the reign of Queen Anne. This error is even now occasionally heard in lax conversation. Another practice, perhaps still more offensive to grammatical propriety, consists in the use of the passive for the active participle: thus, *guiled* for *beguiling*, *delighted* for *delighting*, *deformed* for *de-*

forming, and many others, which are pointed out in the notes to our author's plays, and have been suffered to retain their place in the text without a contest. The third person of the present tense sometimes supplies the place of the passive participle: thus, *heat* for *heated*, *exasperate* for *exasperated*: and here I must take the opportunity of correcting a mistake, which I have fallen into, in a note on *All's Well that Ends Well*, where, enumerating several expressions of that nature, I have said, that *hoist* is put for *hoisted*, which is certainly wrong; as I find the verb *to hoise*, is of very frequent occurrence. But the most numerous class of irregularities which are to be found in Shakspeare, consists in the faulty construction of his sentences, which are sometimes defective, and sometimes redundant, at least if we have a right to try him by the rules which have been drawn from modern writers. Yet it may reasonably be questioned, whether, in speaking of what is so fleeting and variable, and so little reducible to certain principles, as language, we are entitled to say that we are right, and our ancestors were wrong, because their sentences were constructed differently from that mode which we have thought proper to adopt. If a philosophical system could be formed, universally applicable to every language, which would be difficult; and if all mankind could be persuaded to submit to its authority, which I apprehend would be impossible; we might then subject any instance of disputed phraseology to a certain test, and propriety of speech might be clearly ascertained. But when the very reverse of this is notoriously the case; when the same form of expression is correct in Italian, and barbarous in French; when an admired atticism in Greek is a solecism in Latin; can we safely lay down any other maxim than what we have learned from Horace—that language is subject to the dominion of custom alone?

Quem penes arbitrium est et jus et norma loquendi.

The criticks upon ancient authors have conducted themselves with great diffidence upon this point. For what is the long catalogue of rhetorical and poetical figures, that are taught us in our youth, but a respectful enumeration of the anomalies into which distinguished writers have fallen, which are received with submission, and even imitated with confidence, when they come recommended to us by the sanction of such authority? But, in truth, there are, in every language, certain peculiarities which constitute its idiom, which no precepts can teach, and to which no one, who is a foreigner, can ever attain. Dr. Beattie has observed, in one of his letters, that there is a charm in genuine English, as written by a native, which is wanting even in the most correct and eloquent productions which have issued from Scotland; because in these it must, in a great measure, be gathered from books, and consequently the language loses that free and unfettered character which it assumes from the pen of one who has derived it from unstudied practice.

The late Mr. Burke carried this notion to a very remarkable extent. Amidst some of the most splendid specimens of eloquence which the world has ever seen, he would sometimes, it is known, indulge himself in the utmost extreme of colloquial familiarity. In his *Thoughts on a Regicide Peace*, he had spoken of our conquests in the West Indies, if intended to promote our views in Europe, as a “terribly round-about way.” To this Mr. Malone objected as a vulgarity. “My dear Sir (was the answer), I love these phrases, they are the idiom of the language.” When censuring the improprieties of speech, into which our ancestors have fallen, we should recollect that we are in the daily habit of uttering what is equally objectionable. No phrase is of more frequent occurrence, than ‘this day se’ennight;’ but it would not be easy to pronounce with certainty, what this singular ellipsis means. Does it signify, *that* day which will arrive

when seven nights have elapsed? or, when seven nights shall have elapsed after this day? Yet no one hesitates in using this expression; and probably the substitution of any other would subject the person who employed it, to the charge of pedantry or affectation. Let us try another phrase. ‘John drank many glasses of wine, and was *drunk*.’ Translate this literally into any other language, and it would convey the meaning that the toper was at last, by a sort of *lex talionis*, swallowed up himself, like the pilgrims by Garagantua. Yet it is, unquestionably, very good English.

Mr. Steevens, who, in his later editions, has sometimes adopted, and at other times contented himself with proposing, the most unwarrantable alterations in the text of Shakspeare, does not, indeed, directly controvert the mode of arguing on the subject which I have here laid down; he admits that contemporary authority will justify a phrase; but he makes this concession with so many qualifications, that it is almost impracticable for his antagonist to employ it to any purpose. In 1778 Mr. Steevens described himself as one more desirous to support old readings, than to claim the merit of introducing new ones; and has assigned the reason why he has omitted several communications from correspondents, which, he adds, might have proved of great advantage to a more daring commentator. “The majority of these were founded on the supposition, that Shakspeare was, originally, an author correct in the utmost degree; but maimed and interpolated by the neglect or presumption of the players. In consequence of this belief, alterations have been proposed wherever a verse could be harmonized, an epithet exchanged for one more apposite, or a sentiment rendered less perplexed.” Such were the canons of criticism resisted by the commentator of 1778. In 1785, a new edition appeared, nominally conducted by Mr. Reed, but submitted throughout to the approbation of Mr.

Steevens. In this there was no retractation of the doctrine he had formerly held, nor any attempt made to set at nought the authority of the old copies. But when Mr. Malone, in 1790, by a more scrupulous collation, had shown how much might still be added, in point of accuracy, to the labours of his predecessors, Mr. Steevens assumed that courage which he had formerly declared to form no part of his critical character, and became the most "daring commentator" that has ever undertaken the task of editing our great poet. We were now told that he was maimed and interpolated in almost every page, and that the utmost liberties might safely be taken in rendering his sentiments less perplexed, or harmonizing his versification. If an attempt was made to justify the anomalies to be found in his text, by contemporary usage, it is met by the following tirade :

"To revive the anomalies, barbarisms, and blunders of some ancient copies, in preference to the corrections of others almost equally old, is likewise a circumstance by no means honourable to our author, however secure respecting ourselves. For what is it, under pretence of restoration, but to use him as he has used the Tinker in *The Taming of a Shrew*,—to re-clothe him in his pristine rags? To assemble parallels in support of all these deformities, is no insuperable labour; for if we are permitted to avail ourselves of every typographical mistake, and every provincial vulgarity and offence against established grammar, that may be met with in the coeval productions of irregular humourists and ignorant sectaries and buffoons, we may aver that every casual combination of syllables may be tortured into meaning, and every species of corruption exemplified by corresponding depravities of language: but not of such language as Shakspeare, if compared with himself, where he is perfect, can be supposed to have written."

If an author is quoted who does not answer the description here given, some circumstance is disco-

vered in his history, which may supply a topick of ridicule: thus, Stowe, the chronicler, was neither an humourist, a sectary, nor buffoon—but he had been a tailor, and might, therefore, have been suffered to mend Shakspeare's hose, but not to patch his text: if similar phraseology is produced from the poets of that time, we are called upon to recollect that there was then no regular superintendence of the press; and that, therefore, one typographical blunder may be supported by another, proceeding from equal ignorance in all the printers of the age: if Shakspeare is made to illustrate himself, by showing that in a multitude of instances he has expressed himself in the same manner as in the passage under consideration, it is answered, that we have no proof that any one of them is exhibited as it came from the pen of our author, but that they were all corruptions introduced by Heminge and Condell. Where, then, are we to seek for authority, which will be admitted as having any weight? Mr. Steevens shall inform us. "The genuine idiom of our language, at its different periods, can only be ascertained by reference to contemporary writers, whose works were skilfully revised as they passed through the press, and are therefore unsuspected of corruption. A sufficient number of such books are before us." I know not that a number of books, of which it can, with certainty, be said that they were skilfully revised, are to be met with. But if there were, does it follow, that no idiomatick phraseology could have been correct, which they do not contain? A certain laxity of speech is so far from being a blemish in the dialogue of a drama, that it brings it nearer to the conversation of real life; but this is not to be expected, nor would it be fitting in those graver performances, which the author would be likely to superintend with a view to secure its perfect accuracy. We must, therefore, content ourselves with such authority as we can find, and such evidence as the nature of the case will admit of; and if we can discover

in the dramas of others, as they have come down to us, examples of the same incorrectness of language, judging of it according to our present usage, as are to be found in the plays of Shakspeare, we may fairly conclude that there was not a conspiracy among all the printers of that period, to introduce the same violation of grammar, but that the error, if such it be, is to be ascribed to the poet himself. The probability of this conclusion will be strengthened, if we concur in the opinion which has, I believe, universally prevailed, that Shakspeare, with all his transcendent excellence, was a rapid and careless writer; inattentive often to matters of much more importance than the correct construction of a sentence; regardless of fame, and solicitous only for the immediate effect which he could produce upon the stage before a popular audience. But it is not against obsolete anomalies alone that Mr. Steevens has directed his hostility: he is such a purist in style, that he is desirous to exclude from the text phraseology which is not only to be met with perpetually in the present day, but of which the impropriety may admit of a question. In *King John*, Act II. Sc. I. vol. xv. p. 224, we meet with this line:

“With them a bastard of the *king's* deceased.”

This the modern editors altered to “the king deceased;” and Mr. Steevens ascribes the old reading to the error of an illiterate compositor. Mr. Malone does not contend for its accuracy, but states, what is not denied, that Shakspeare has the same phraseology elsewhere. If it be faulty at all, it is an error which might be countenanced by half of the writers even now existing; but it has the express sanction of Dr. Lowth, in his grammar. “Both the sign and the preposition seem sometimes to be used;” as “a soldier of the *king's*,” but here are really two possessives; for it means ‘one *of* the soldiers *of* the king.’

I shall more than once have occasion to refer to the

elegant little work from which I have taken the foregoing quotation. It has been mentioned with a sneer by Mr. John Horne Tooke, it is true; but in a Bishop he could not see desert. It has well answered its purpose, which, as Lowth himself informs us, was not to enter into any subtle disquisition, but to give instruction to learners even of the lowest class. If therefore we have no recondite inquiry into the original sources of English, nor any attempt to restore the rights of those native burghers of our language, which have been pushed from their stools by the tyranny of modern usage; we have precepts given us, by which we shall be enabled to address ourselves with propriety to those living like ourselves in these degenerate days, although it would not supply us with the means of conversing with Hocleve or Hardinge. On the present occasion it will be of considerable use. Many readers, who could not readily appreciate the authority which is due to a quotation from Middleton or Marston, will have no difficulty in believing that a phrase might have passed without objection in the reign of Elizabeth, if they shall find a similar inaccuracy laid before them in the pages of Addison, Swift, or Pope. The grammatical anomalies which Dr. Lowth has pointed out to us in those distinguished writers, and others of established character, will be found, in their aggregate, to exceed in number all of those which the most strict critical investigation can discover in the plays of Shakspeare. In looking to the faults of construction, which have been objected to in our poet, it will appear that a great portion of them may be considered either as omissions or redundancies. Mr. Warton, in his *Observations on the Fairy Queen*, has attributed the great number of Spenser's ellipses to the difficulty of a stanza injudiciously chosen; and adds, that it may easily be conceived how that constraint, which occasioned superfluity, should, at the same time, be the cause of omission. A number of instances of ellipsis, in which he tells us the reader will find his omission of

the relative to be frequent, are collected in the seventh section of his second volume, and ascribed to the rapidity with which Spenser composed. "Hurried away by the impetuosity of imagination, he frequently cannot find time to attend to the niceties of construction; or to stand still and revise what he had before written, in order to avoid contradictions, inconsistencies, and repetitions." But, in truth, these elliptical expressions are not peculiar to Spenser, but perpetually occur in every writer of that age. In Shakspeare they are abundant; and Mr. Steevens, who is ready to sacrifice any thing for the purpose of supporting his new system of amended versification, is desirous of adding to their number. Not to fatigue the reader with a multiplication of passages to prove what I have described as the general usage of the time, I will content myself with the following: "Tis true I have profest it to you ingenuously, that rather than be yoked with this bridegroom [which] is appointed me, I would take up any husband almost upon any trust." *Ben Jonson's Bartholomew Fair.*

"I would fain seem, sir, and as fain endeavour,

"With duteous labour to deserve the love

"Of that good gentleman [who] shall entertain me."

Night Walker, by Fletcher and Shirley.

"To survive him,

"To me is worse than death, and therefore [I] should not

"Embrace the means of my escape, though offered."

Massinger's Bashful Lover.

I will add one more instance from Brathwaite, in his *Contemplations*, appended to his *Essay on the Five Senses*, 1625. Brathwaite was so far from being careless about any inaccuracies that might have crept into his text, that Mr. Haslewood considers a formal address to his readers, "upon the errata," as a distinctive mark by which his compositions may be known; yet in one of these *Contemplations*, intitled, *The Burial of the Old Man*, he thus confusedly expresses himself, from the omission of the personal pronoun: "The

crab-fish (when the oyster doth open herself) casteth a stone into her shell, and [she] being so disabled to shut herself, becomes a prey unto the crab." Yet frequent as is the occurrence of an ellipsis in our old writers, and willing as Mr. Steevens is to introduce it, when it is not found in the original text, in order that he may cut down an Alexandrine to a verse of ten syllables, he makes no scruple of filling it up when it occurs in the oldest copy. In a note on *Othello*, vol. ix. p. 258, Mr. Malone has justified an omission of this nature, by referring the reader to a passage in *Cymbeline*, where several instances of similar phraseology are collected. But Mr. Steevens does not hesitate (as he says) to call, what is styled "similar phraseology," congeniality of omissions and blunders, made by transcribers, players, or printers; and, in contradiction to his own canons of versification, contends for the introduction of an Alexandrine where there was none before. Another fault, which Mr. Warton seems to consider as peculiar to Spenser, is redundancy, of which he gives the following example:

" B. III. C. VI. ST. XI.

" It fortun'd fair Venus, having lost
 " Her little son, the winged son of love,
 " * * * * *

" ST. XII.

" Him for to seeke she left her heavenly house.

"*She* is unnecessary in the last line, as *fair Venus* is the nominative case." It is surely a very allowable licence to introduce the pronoun here, instead of sending the reader nine lines back, to the commencement of the former stanza, in quest of a nominative. In order that the meaning may be more clearly understood, which, after all, is the great object of language, many writers have made a similar sacrifice of grammatical strictness. In the absolution prayer in the Liturgy, we find, "*he* pardoneth and absolveth," notwithstanding the Deity is the nominative case preceding; but so far removed

from the verb, that it seems to have been apprehended that some confusion might arise, without the introduction of the pronoun. Duport, in his Greek translation, has accurately followed the original English; but in that which was made in French, for the use of foreign protestants, resident in this country, an alteration has taken place; the grammar has been strictly adhered to; and the consequence is, that the meaning has been obscured. But in modern writers the same licence has been adopted, without being justified by the same necessity. Thus Pope:

“ The coxcomb bird so talkative and grave,
 “ Who from his cage calls coxcomb, fool, or knave;
 “ Though many a passenger he rightly call,
 “ We hold *him* no philosopher at all.”

There are few who do not recollect the pathetick commencement of Young's Night Thoughts:

“ Tired nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep:
 “ *He* like the world his ready visit pays,
 “ Where fortune smiles,” &c.

The first line appears as if it were merely an announcement of what is to be the subject of the following verses, the personage whose office is to be described. Let us try whether we cannot, in some measure, support a passage in the *Tempest*, by allowing it a similar licence:

“ A noble Neapolitan, Gonzalo,
 “ Out of his charity. Who being then appointed
 “ Master of this design, did give us,” &c.

That is, ‘ a noble Neapolitan, Gonzalo, was charitable. Who,’ &c. If this mode of opening the construction of the passage should not be admitted, the reader will find in Mr. Malone's note on those lines, a number of instances from other passages in our author's plays, which are exposed to the charge of equal irregularity, which however are got rid of by Mr. Steevens, upon his usual summary maxim, that the

old copies were corrupt throughout. But is it only in Shakspeare, or even in his contemporaries, that in a long sentence the construction becomes involved? I will borrow from Dr. Lowth a quotation from Dean Swift, a writer remarkable for the correctness of his style, of which the great characteristick is a neglect of ornament and an attention to precision: "An Undertaking *which*, although it has failed (partly, &c. and partly, &c.), is no objection at all to an enterprize so well concerted, and with such fair probability of success." *Swift's Conduct of the Allies*. "That is," says Lowth, "which Undertaking is no objection to an Enterprize so well concerted. That is, *to itself*, he means; 'the failure or miscarriage of which is no objection at all to it.'" But the very inaccuracy which is found in the *Tempest*, may be paralleled by one in Tillotson, whose reputation is not perhaps so high at the present day as formerly; but who cannot be considered as an incorrect or slovenly writer. "*Who* instead of going about doing good, *they* are perpetually intent upon doing mischief." *Tillotson's Sermons*, i. 18. If Shakspeare is sometimes defective in his construction, he is also sometimes redundant:

"In what enormity is Marcius poor *in*?"

Coriolanus, vol. xiv. p. 58.

Here Mr. Malone is the only editor who has retained the redundant *in*, which Mr. Steevens rejects till authority has been produced for it. In a note on *Romeo and Juliet*, the reader will find ample authority produced, not from "humourists, sectaries, or buffoons," or even from John Stowe the tailor; but from our old translation of the Scriptures, which, we are certain, underwent a careful revision in its passage through the press, and from manuscript letters of the time of Elizabeth. Here again we shall find that the lax phraseology of our ancestors may be kept in countenance by writers of acknowledged rank in a succeed-

ing age. "Commend me," (says Bentley in his Dissertation on the Epistles of Euripides) "to an argument *that* like a flail there's no defence against *it*."

It will not be necessary to fatigue the reader by a distinct examination of all the anomalies to be found in Shakspeare's text, and which, as such, Mr. Steevens would have wished to exclude or alter. If some of the most prominent are selected, and shown to be supported by sufficient authority, the reader will be enabled, by analogy, to form the same conclusion as to the rest, which, if they were in every instance to be made the subject of a separate examination, would make it necessary to write—not an essay, but a book. A specimen will establish the necessity of a faithful adherence to the old copies, and will teach even an editor to be cautious, lest he himself should fall into those very errors which Mr. Steevens has observed would render it dangerous to employ substitutes in any part of his work; "who, instead of pointing out real mistakes, would have supposed the existence of such as were merely founded on their own want of acquaintance with the peculiarities of ancient spelling and language*." Before, however, I dismiss the subject, there are a few more of these peculiarities, of which I must take some notice. It has been remarked by Johnson, that Shakspeare is very uncertain in the use of his particles. He is so: but this uncertainty did not attach to him more than to any other writer of his age, or, indeed, for a long period after. A bare list of prepositions and conjunctions, which were used in a different manner in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, from that which would be deemed correct at the present day, would occupy a considerable space; but a specimen of them, compared with some instances of a later date, will be found at the end of this essay. The syntax of Shakspeare, if it had been

* Mr. Steevens's Advertisement, p. 276.

preserved throughout, as it appears in the old copies, would have appeared harsh to a modern reader; and one error has been corrected, wherever it occurs, by all the editors, even by Mr. Malone himself, except where the metre, and more especially the rhyme, demanded its preservation. I mean when a plural nominative case is followed by a verb in the singular number. The writings of our great poet have been so long *in ore hominum* with these alterations, that an editor who should restore his language to its pristine form, would have little chance of meeting with gratitude for his pains in restoring the old *mumpsimus*. But lest Shakspeare should be accused of an unwarrantable licence, where, in compliance with the versification, it has been retained, the reader should keep in mind that such was the usage not only of careless writers at that period, but that it is to be found in the compositions of learned men, even when they were employed on subjects which particularly called for a careful attention to their diction. Wilson, one of the best of our early criticks, has the following passage in his *Art of Rhetorick*, which will exemplify what I have here advanced:

“ Though mē kepe their goodes neuer so close, and locke them vp neuer so fast, yet often times, either by some mischaunce of fyre, or other thinge, they are lost, or els desperate *Dickes borowes* nowe and then againste the owners wille, all that euer he hathe.”

Mr. Malone, upon other occasions, has not thought it fit to deviate from the language of the ancient copies; and perhaps, if he had been charged with inconsistency, it might not have been so easy to furnish an answer; but when it is contended by Mr. Steevens, that the inaccuracies which these passages contain are not imputable to the author, but are the blunders of Heminge and Condell, it can be satisfactorily shown that the observation is unfounded.

In Julius Cæsar, the following line occurs. See vol. xii. p. 134 :

“ The *posture* of your blows *are* yet unknown.”

Mr. Malone, after noticing the grammatical inaccuracy, yet contends that it ought to be retained, because the error was certainly Shakspeare's. Mr. Steevens attributes it to the transcriber or printer, and therefore is of opinion that it ought to be corrected. In a note on Love's Labour's Lost, several instances of a similar inaccuracy are pointed out in our author, and one is cited from Marlow. But here again we shall find that Shakspeare has not more offended against propriety of speech, than writers of a later period. The following instances are collected by Dr. Lowth: “ It is requisite that the language of an heroic poem, should be both perspicuous and sublime. In proportion as *either* of these qualities *are* wanting, the language is imperfect.” *Addison's Spect.* No. 285. “ 'Tis observable that every *one* of the Letters *bear* date after his banishment; and *contain* a complete narrative of all his story afterwards.” *Bentley's Dissert. on Themistocles's Epistles*, sect. ii. “ I do not mean, by what I have said, that I think any *one* to blame for taking due care of *their* health.” *Addison's Spect.* No. 25. But even after Dr. Lowth had called our attention to these instances of careless phraseology, we find Mr. Thomas Warton guilty of the same mistake. In a note on the Second Part of Henry IV. vol. xvii. p. 132, n. 6, he thus expresses himself: “ But Beaumont and Fletcher's play, though founded upon it, contains many satirical strokes against Heywood's comedy, *the force* of which *are* entirely lost to those who have not seen that comedy.” In all these instances a plural idea has taken possession of the mind, and the recollection of the grammatical rule is effaced by its influence. Other violations of syntax, such as the use of a nominative case where it

should have been an accusative, and an accusative where it should have been a nominative, are of such perpetual occurrence in English writers throughout, as, for example, 'Let you and *I* do such a thing,' that it is scarcely necessary to vindicate Shakspeare's practice in this respect, either by contemporary or later authority. Dr. Lowth has shown this error in many of our most distinguished modern authors, namely, Swift, Bolingbroke, Atterbury, Congreve, Prior, and Bentley. The strongest instance he has produced, is from Hobbes's History of Civil Wars: "If the King give us leave, you or *I* may as lawfully preach as *them* that do."

But after all that can be said with respect to the irregularities which are to be found in Shakspeare, we should recollect how small a proportion they bear to the great bulk of his works which are not only free from every objection on this score, but fully justify Dr. Johnson's remark, that among his other excellencies he deserves to be studied as one of the original masters of our language. The popularity which attends his name, far beyond that of any other poet which his country has produced, is to be attributed not only to the power of his sentiment, but to the vigour of his expression; not only to "his thoughts that breathe," but to his "words that burn."

In exhibiting his text, therefore, purified from modern innovation, no injury will be done to his fame: while a knowledge of our language, its progress, its merits, and its defects, will be promoted by its faithful display in the writings of one who will ever be its greatest boast.

The liberties which have been taken by Mr. Steevens in re-modelling the diction of Shakspeare, and reducing it to a modern standard, though sufficiently daring, are trivial, compared with those in which he has indulged on the subject of versification. Not a single play has escaped from being "carved like an

apple tart," with "snip and nip, and cut and slit, and slish and slash;" so that the poet of Elizabeth's reign, if he were to behold the new garb in which his editor has clothed him, might well exclaim with his own Petruchio, "Why, what o' devil's name call'st thou this?" It is impossible, by the utmost stretch of candour, to believe that one who was so thoroughly versed in old English literature, could have been unconscious how unfounded his positions were, or that he was misleading the reader. Mr. Gifford has justly, as well as humorously, designated him the Puck of Commentators. His own character he felt was so well established, that he might venture upon paradoxes which he would not have hazarded at the commencement of his critical career; and we may readily conceive how much his fondness for ridicule was gratified, while, with seeming complacency, he was adopting the most unwarrantable alterations of his author's text, "by the advice of Mr. Ritson." Yet since his death his system has been completely burlesqued by a gentleman of the name of Seymour, who has thus described the employment of a critick on Shakspeare: "In the twilight obscurity of this vast region, where vagrant opinion will often be allured by vanity, that *ignis fatuus*, to tread the perilous wilds of conjecture." This *ignis fatuus* has misled Mr. Seymour into such fantastical attempts at emendation, that I question whether Mr. Steevens would have marched through Coventry with him. The change which the opinions of Mr. Steevens had undergone, is thus announced to us in a note on the *Tempest*, which it should be recollected stood first in the order of the plays in all the editions which preceded the present. See vol. xv. p. 85: "Though I once expressed a different opinion, I am now well convinced that the metre of Shakspeare's plays had originally no other irregularity than was occasioned by an accidental use of hemistichs. When we find the smoothest series of lines among

our earliest dramattick writers (who could fairly boast of no other requisites for poetry) are we to expect less polished versification from Shakspeare?" An *accidental* use of hemistichs is a phrase not very easy to be understood. But not to detain ourselves with verbal criticism, it would have been well if Mr. Steevens had given us more particular information where those early dramattick writers, so distinguished by the smoothness of their versification, were to be found. So far from this being the fact, it may be safely asserted, that there is not in all Shakspeare, from beginning to end, a single line, as exhibited in the old copies, which, in point of harshness, cannot be justified by the example of other writers of his time. After every deduction has been made from his general excellence, even in point of metre; after every passage has been produced which can give offence to the most delicate ear; yet still he will retain an ample claim to the eulogium pronounced upon him by Johnson, and perhaps more: "To him we must ascribe the praise, unless Spenser may divide it with him, of having first discovered to how much smoothness and harmony the English language could be softened. He has speeches, perhaps sometimes scenes, which have all the delicacy of Rowe, without his effeminacy. He endeavours, indeed, commonly to strike by the force and vigour of his dialogue; but he never executes his purpose better, than when he tries to sooth by softness." To establish the truth of both these positions, to show that Shakspeare's irregularities were not peculiar to himself, and that our versification received important improvements from his hand, will form the topicks which are discussed in the following remarks.

ON SHAKSPEARE'S VERSIFICATION.

The lines which were objected to by his early editors, which Mr. Steevens, during the greater part

of his life considered as proceeding from the poet's pen, but which he latterly endeavoured to represent as corruptions introduced by ignorant players or transcribers, may, for the most part, be classed under three divisions: those which are supposed to be redundant; those which are said to be defective; and those which are charged with being rough, and halting, from a faulty accentuation. The intermixture of rhyme with blank verse, and the irregularities which have sometimes attended its adoption, will be separately discussed. To speak, then, in the first place, of those verses which have been accused of redundancy. There is not a play of Shakspeare's in which Alexandrines do not frequently occur. These Mr. Steevens sometimes passes over without any remark; but in a multitude of instances, "by the advice of Mr. Ritson," cuts off two syllables, in order, as he says, to restore the metre. Had he been consistent, he should have objected to them all; but this is frequently impossible, without a total demolition of what the author had written, and substituting something else in its place. Here, therefore, Mr. Steevens preserves a complete silence. On those occasions where he has applied his critical knife for the purpose of amputation, it is worthy of remark, that the term Alexandrine is scarcely ever employed; but a general remark is made as to the imperfection of the metre. Had this sort of line been designated by its usual name, a question would have suggested itself to the most careless reader. We have Alexandrines in Dryden and in Pope, the most scrupulously correct of all our poets; why then should they be regarded as inadmissible in Shakspeare? If we could suppose Mr. Steevens to have been influenced by the authority of another's opinion on a question of English literature, which no one had more assiduously studied than himself, we might be led to conclude that he had been misled by Dr. John-

son. In the Life of Dryden, we meet with the following observations :

“ Of Triplets and Alexandrines, though he did not introduce the use, he established it. The triplet has long subsisted among us. Dryden seems not to have traced it higher than to Chapman’s Homer ; but it is to be found in Phaer’s Virgil, written in the reign of Mary ; and in Hall’s Satires, published five years before the death of Elizabeth.

“ The Alexandrine was, I believe, first used by Spenser, for the sake of closing his stanza with a fuller sound. We had a longer measure of fourteen syllables, into which the Eneid was translated by Phaer, and other works of the ancients by other writers ; of which Chapman’s Iliad was, I believe, the last.

“ The two first lines of Phaer’s third Eneid will exemplify this measure :

‘ When Asia’s state was overthrown, and Priam’s kingdom stout,
‘ All guiltless, by the power of gods above was rooted out.’

“ As these lines had their break, or *cæsure*, always at the eighth syllable, it was thought, in time, commodious to divide them : and quatrains of lines, alternately, consisting of eight and six syllables, make the most soft and pleasing of our lyrick measures ; as,

‘ Relentless Time, destroying power,
‘ Which stone and brass obey,
‘ Who giv’st to ev’ry flying hour
‘ To work some new decay.’

“ In the Alexandrine, when its power was once felt, some poems, as Drayton’s Polyolbion, were wholly written ; and sometimes the measures of twelve and fourteen syllables were interchanged with one another. Cowley was the first that inserted the Alexandrine at pleasure among the heroick lines of ten syllables, and from him Dryden professes to have adopted it.”

No part of this statement is accurate. That Spenser was the first who used the Alexandrine at the close of a stanza, is not strictly true; and that Cowley was the first that inserted it at pleasure, among the heroick lines of ten syllables, is altogether unfounded, as I think I shall most satisfactorily prove; by showing that it is found thus intermingled, not only in the poetry of Elizabeth's reign, but at a much earlier period. The antiquity of the triplet also has not been carried sufficiently high; but as that is not immediately connected with a discussion on Shakspeare's metre, I shall content myself with the production of one instance from a writer long prior to Phaer. In one of Hearne's long disquisitions, introduced in his glossary to Robert of Gloucester's Chronicle, under the word Sire, he has quoted the epilogue of Alexander Barclay, to his translation of Mancyn, on the Four Cardinal Virtues. It is printed as prose, but was evidently designed for verse, such as it is. As it is not long, I shall quote it entirely.

<p>“ Rede this lyttell treatice, o juvent of Englande : “ As myrroure of good manners ye chefely of London stande; “ And whan ye it redyng shall perfyte understande ; “ Gyve ye lande and thankes, to Gyles Alyngton “ Knight, at whose precept this treatyse was begon : “ If this do you profyte, that shal my mynde excyte, “ Of mo frutefull matters after this to wryte.”</p>	}
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But the introduction of the Alexandrine into our language, will demand a fuller inquiry; and with this view I shall venture to detain the reader with a short history of the state of our versification, from the period when the heroick line of ten syllables was first substituted by Chaucer, in the room of our more ancient measures. This investigation will not only serve to show that the use of the Alexandrine was much more ancient than has generally been supposed; but by exhibiting to us the condition of our metre,

when Shakspeare and Spenser arose, will supply us with the materials of judging how far we are indebted to those two great poets for the harmony of our language. But before we enter upon this inquiry, a preliminary objection must be overcome. A theory has been lately advanced, and has gained, as I am told, some distinguished proselytes, which would, if well founded, put an end to such a question altogether. It would be absurd to examine what was the metrical system of our earliest poets, if, as my friend, Dr. Nott, has laboured to persuade us, before the time of Lord Surrey, they had no knowledge of metre at all. While I am happy to bear testimony to the ingenuity and research which have been displayed in support of this position, I have no hesitation in saying, that they have not, in any degree, contributed to satisfy me of its truth. If Dr. Nott's opinion should be considered as correct, the principles laid down by Mr. Tyrwhitt, in his Essay on Chaucer's Versification, must fall to the ground; and, accordingly, Dr. Nott has expressly undertaken to convince us that those principles are wholly erroneous. Yet, while he controverts Mr. Tyrwhitt's notions, he has never lost sight of the respect that is due to so distinguished an antagonist; but has carried on the discussion with the urbanity of a gentleman and a scholar. I cannot congratulate my friend on having gained a victory; but he has fought with gallantry and vigour. To have been engaged in such a contest with one of the most judicious, as well as learned, criticks that our country can boast of, is no small honour, even under defeat: *certainse feretur*.

The opinions of Dr. Nott and Mr. Tyrwhitt come in conflict with each other, on the very threshold of the inquiry. Mr. Tyrwhitt sets out with stating, that a large proportion of Chaucer's lines are conformable to the ordinary rules of metre. He has, perhaps, rendered his argument deficient in clearness,

by blending two propositions, which it would have been better to have kept distinct. The first is, that Chaucer's verses were hendecasyllabical; the second, that whether they were intended to consist of ten or eleven syllables, they were designed to be metrically correct. Dr. Nott has denied this statement in all its parts; he endeavours to show that they are not hendecasyllables, and goes on to assert that a large proportion of them cannot be read as iambick decasyllables, without doing the utmost violence to our language. It is not easy to determine between two such opposite opinions, by a comparison of all the proofs on either side, which would require (as Mr. Tyrwhitt has observed) an examination of about forty thousand verses. I have taken a shorter mode. I have tried the experiment upon those lines which have been quoted by Dr. Nott, and I find the majority of them, to my ear at least, perfectly harmonious. Mr. Tyrwhitt had selected the first eighteen verses of the *Canterbury Tales* as a specimen of Chaucer's poetry, as it ought to be read according to his system. Dr. Nott has, with great fairness, produced the very same, in order to exemplify his own.

“ To give the reader a clear notion of what I conceive to have been Chaucer's system of versification, I will transcribe (he says) the opening lines of the *Canterbury Tales*, marking as well the cæsura in the middle of each verse, as the pause at the end; and also the strongly accented syllables, to shew in what manner rhythmical Decasyllabic verses were, I apprehend, recited.

- ‘ 1. Whēn thāt Aprīl || wīth hīs shōurēs sòote |
- ‘ 2. Thē droūght of Mārch || hād piērcēd tō thē ròote |
- ‘ 3. And bāthēd ēvēry vēin || īn sūch līquòr |
- ‘ 4. Of whīch vīrtùe || ēngēdērēd īs thē flòur |
- ‘ 5. Whēn Zēphīrūs ēke || wīth hīs sōote brēath |
- ‘ 6. Enspīrēd hāth || īn ēvēry hōlt and heāth |
- ‘ 7. Thē tēndēr crōppēs || and thē yōung sùn |
- ‘ 8. Hāth īn thē Rām || hālf hīs cōurse y-rùn |

- ‘ 9. Ańd smāll fōwlès || mākēn mēlōdīe |
 ‘ 10. Thăt slēepēn āll thē nīght || wīth ōpēn ēīe |
 ‘ 11. Sō prīckēth thēm nātūre || īn thēīr cōūrāges |
 ‘ 12. Thēn lōngēn fōlk || tō gō ōn pīlgrīmāges |
 ‘ 13. And pālmērēs || tō sēekēn strānge strōndēs |
 ‘ 14. Tō sērve hālwēs || cōūth īn sūndrȳ lōndēs |
 ‘ 15. Ańd spēcīāllīe || frōm ēvērȳ shīrēs ēnd |
 ‘ 16. Of Englānd || tō Cāntērbūrȳ thēy wēnd |
 ‘ 17. Thē hōlȳ blīssfūl Mārtȳr || fōr tō sēek |
 ‘ 18. Thăt thēm hāth hōlpēn || wēn thāt thēy wēre sēke |”

Dr. Nott agrees with Mr. Tyrwhitt, that “ the final syllables of plural nouns, and of nouns in the genitive case, as well as of participles and verbs, may, and often ought to be pronounced in Chaucer, and in all our early poets.” With this concession made to us, if we place the accent, as Dr. Nott has properly marked it, on the second syllable of such words as *virtue*, *liquour*, we shall find, I apprehend, that ten out of the eighteen lines run smoothly, without requiring the aid of Mr. Tyrwhitt’s theory, which need, therefore, only be applied to the remaining eight. This, then, is the principal point at issue between them : Mr. Tyrwhitt contends that the *e* final, or *e* feminine, was anciently pronounced in such words as *soote*, *alle*, &c. As he has, I think, been very much misunderstood by Dr. Nott, I will give his own words.

“ But nothing will be found of such extensive use for supplying the deficiencies of Chaucer’s metre, as the pronunciation of the *e* feminine ; and as that pronunciation has been for a long time totally antiquated, it may be proper here to suggest some reasons for believing (independently of any arguments to be drawn from the practice of Chaucer himself) that the final *e* in our antient language was very generally pronounced, as the *e* feminine is at this day by the French.

“ With respect to words imported directly from France, it is certainly quite natural to suppose, that, for some time, they retained their native pronuncia-

tion ; whether they were Nouns substantive, as, *hoste*, ver. 753. *face*, ver. 1580, &c.—or Adjectives, as, *large*, ver. 755. *strange*, ver. 13, &c.—or Verbs, as, *grante*, ver. 12756. *preche*, ver. 12327, &c. and it cannot be doubted, that in these and other similar words in the French language, the final *e* was always pronounced, as it still is, so as to make them dissyllables.

“ We have not indeed so clear a proof of the original pronunciation of the Saxon part of our language; but we know, from general observation, that all changes of pronunciation are usually made by small degrees ; and therefore, when we find that a great number of those words, which in Chaucer’s time ended in *e*, originally ended in *a*, we may reasonably presume, that our ancestors first passed from the broader sound of *a* to the thinner sound of *e* feminine, and not at once from *a* to *e* mute. Besides, if the final *e* in such words was not pronounced, why was it added? From the time that it has confessedly ceased to be pronounced, it has been gradually omitted in them, except where it may be supposed of use to lengthen or soften the preceding syllable, as in—*hope*, *name*, &c. But according to the ancient orthography it terminates many words of Saxon original, where it cannot have been added for any such purpose, as *herte*, *childe*, *olde*, *wilde*, &c. In these therefore we must suppose that it was pronounced as an *e* feminine, and made part of a second syllable ; and so, by a parity of reason, in all others, in which, as in these, it appears to have been substituted for the Saxon *a*.

“ Upon the same grounds we may presume, that in words terminated, according to the Saxon form, in *en*, such as the Infinitive modes and Plural numbers of Verbs, and a great variety of Adverbs and Prepositions, the *n* only was at first thrown away, and the *e*, which then became final, continued for a long time to be pronounced as well as written.

“ These considerations seem sufficient to make us believe, that the pronunciation of the *e* feminine is founded on the very nature of both the French and Saxon parts of our language ; and therefore, though we may not be able to trace the reasons of that pronunciation in all cases so plainly as in those which have been just mentioned, we may safely, I think, conclude with the learned Wallis, that what is generally considered as an *e* mute in our language, either at the end or in the middle of words, was anciently pronounced, but obscurely, like the *e* feminine of the French.”

Let us now see Dr. Nott's answer.

“ Every one will admit that the final syllables of plural nouns, and of nouns in the genitive case, as well as of participles and verbs, may, and often ought to be pronounced in Chaucer, and in all our early poets. As far as this rule therefore applies, no objection can be raised to the system. But I do not see how the use of Saxon terminations can be allowed, unless the unequivocal consent of good manuscripts warrant the conclusion that Chaucer in particular cases allowed himself that licence.

“ That he ever did, I doubt. Chaucer's object was to polish the language of his day. To do this he would naturally reject all words of an obsolete form, and all vulgar modes of pronunciation. That a large number of Saxon words, with their original terminations, must have then become obsolete, or have been used by the common people only, or in particular provinces, may be concluded as well from the state of the best MSS. of Chaucer, as from the history of our language. We know that the use of the English, that is of the Anglo-Saxon language, had been discouraged from the time of the Conquest, and that it had been in a great degree superseded by the general introduction of the French, which had become for nearly two centuries as well the language of polite

literature, as of the Court. The original Saxon terminations of words, therefore, must in Chaucer's time have grown greatly into disuse; consequently, were we now to introduce those terminations into Chaucer's text for the sake of gaining syllables, the probability is that we should make Chaucer counteract his own purpose; for then, instead of having polished the language of his times, he would be found to have made it appear more rude and antiquated than in reality it was.

“ But the principal objections to Mr. Tyrwhitt's hypothesis, omitting to urge many of minor import, are those which apply to the assumption of the ‘*e*’ feminine, without which the system, were every thing else conceded, could not stand. For, in the first place, such a mode of pronunciation would be in direct opposition to the nature and genius of our language, which, instead of dilating words for the purpose of multiplying syllables, tends to contract words as much as possible, and throws off not only final vowels, the use of which may be often doubtful, but entire syllables, even where those syllables are wanted to preserve grammatical distinction. Now it appears to me incredible that Chaucer, who was remarkable for his common sense and practical view of things, meaning to form a standard style in language, should begin by introducing a novel mode of pronunciation, which, being contrary to common usage, could not be generally adopted. In this also he would have defeated his own purpose, and would have incurred the same ridicule to which a writer of later times has exposed himself in proposing to improve the harmony of our numbers, by giving an Italian termination to our words.

“ A still stronger objection to this supposed use of the ‘*e*’ feminine rests upon a matter of fact, It is said to be similar to the use of the ‘*e*’ feminine in the French, from which, therefore, we are to consider

it derived. But it remains yet to be proved that the use of the ‘*e*’ feminine, such as is here contended for, was then established in French poetry. It seems clear to me that it was not; nor do I doubt but that every one will arrive at the same conclusion, who will give himself the trouble to examine dispassionately the early French poets, and particularly the manuscript copies of their works. If therefore Chaucer really did employ the ‘*e*’ feminine in his versification, in the manner supposed, it must have been a contrivance purely of his own invention; a supposition this which, I apprehend, few will be disposed to maintain.”

It appears to me that there is scarcely a sentence in the foregoing extract, which is not a *petitio principii*. That words pronounced with the *e* feminine were obsolete in Chaucer’s days, is the very point which ought to have been proved; that the great bulk of our language never ceased to be of a Saxon origin, is a fact in which almost all antiquaries agree. That words were dilated by Chaucer, has never been asserted by Mr. Tyrwhitt; his notion was, that they had not yet been contracted in the “English undefiled” of his time. But how can we account for Dr. Nott’s suspecting Mr. Tyrwhitt of such an absurdity as he has here ascribed to him? “It is said to be similar to the use of the *e* feminine in the French, *from which therefore we are to consider it derived.*” If the reader will look back to Mr. Tyrwhitt’s words, he will not find that great critick so totally ignorant of the history of language, as to imagine for a moment, that any property belonging to the Saxon part of our tongue, could be derived from the French; but when he contends with Urry, Morell, and Wallis, that the final *e* was anciently pronounced, he illustrates the mode in which this was done, by referring, as a parallel instance, to another language, in which that pronunciation even now exists. Dr. Nott has spoken of Urry

and Morell, as Tyrwhitt's precursors in this opinion ; but he has not made the least mention of Wallis, who taught it to them all in his English Grammar, when he had no hypothesis either with regard to Chaucer, or any other poet, to influence his judgment. Wallis tells us that even in his day, there were traces left of this pronunciation ; that from *commande*, you had *commandement* as a word of four syllables. Instances of this and of other words, extended in the same manner, will be given hereafter in a subsequent part of this Essay. Mr. Tyrwhitt's theory would therefore remain untouched, as far as the Saxon part of our language is concerned, even if we were to adopt Dr. Nott's startling discovery, that the *e* feminine was not pronounced in early French poetry. It is to be wished that we had been furnished more particularly with the grounds upon which this notion is founded, instead of a general reference to the early French poets. I have gone to them with this view, but I find nothing that does not appear to me to negative Dr. Nott's suggestion. No nation in history has taken greater pains than the French have done in tracing minutely the history of their language ; their *e* feminine has been frequently the subject of ample discussion ; but I know not of any one of their numerous criticks, who has had the slightest suspicion of the singular fact which Dr. Nott supposes he has discovered. That Chaucer had models of correct and harmonious versification before him in the Italian poets, with whom his imitations drawn from that language prove him to have been familiarly acquainted, is clear. In borrowing their subjects, it is not easy to suppose that such a poet could have an ear incapable of appreciating the value of their metre. When deserting the ancient measures in which his countrymen had written before him, and introducing a new one of his own, he would scarcely follow the worst examples to be found in the works of his pre-

decessors. In fact, we find him sometimes producing lines which Dryden, no mean master of harmony, was unable to improve; yet these, according to Dr. Nott's hypothesis, were merely accidental. But the following reasons are assigned why Chaucer's verses were rhythmical, and not metrical.

"First, because a large proportion of them cannot be read as Iambic Decasyllables, without doing the utmost violence to our language; all which verses are harmonious as verses of cadence, if read with the cæsura rhythmically. And further, because all those verses might easily, by a slight transposition, have been made pure Iambic Decasyllables, had Chaucer either known that mode of versification, or intended to have adopted it: as in the following instance.

'In her is high beauty withouten pride.'

Cant. Tales, 4522.

"Unless this line be read rhythmically it has no principle of harmony at all; but when so read, it has all the harmony *that sort* of versification aspires to.

'In hër is hìgh bëauté || wìthòutën prìde.'

"Had the Iambic Decasyllabic measure been intended, the line with the transposition of a single word, might have been made a perfect Iambic Decasyllable. We cannot suppose that this would have escaped Chaucer's notice.

'In her high beauty is, withouten pride.'

"The above observations apply to a large number of lines of a similar construction, occurring in almost every page of Chaucer's works."

The line here quoted is said to have no principle of harmony at all. What then shall we say of Milton?

"So said he, and forbore not glance or toy

"Of amorous intent: well understood

"Of Eve, whose eye *darted* contagious fire."

Par. Lost, b. ix. 1034.

Or Fairfax :

“ The armed ships, *coasting* along the shore.”
Godfrey of Bulloigne, b. i. st. 78.

Lord Surrey is said to have first taught us regular metre, and Dr. Nott produces the following lines, to show how well he varied his pauses :

“ Did yield—*vanguished* for want of martial art—
 “ Of just—*David* by perfect penitence.”

How is that a blemish in Chaucer, which is an excellence in Surrey? But, in truth, Chaucer requires no authority to justify him ; for he has not indulged in any licence at all. Dr. Nott has most correctly laid the accent on the second syllable of the word *beauté*, by which means the line has not only the harmony which that sort of versification (i. e. the rhythmical) aspires to, but it is as pure an iambic as can be found in Pope.

That Chaucer imagined that his own verses were metrical, and that he was even solicitous that they should not suffer in their harmony from ignorant transcription, is evident from what he says in *Troilus* and *Cressida*, if the words are taken in their natural and ordinary sense :

“ So pray I God that none miswrite thee
 “ Ne the *mismetre* for Default of Tunge.”

But Dr. Nott would persuade us that when he talks of metre, he means something else ; and that his injunction is only that the rhythmical cadence may not be injured by a mistaken position of the *cæsura*. Another passage has been often cited from his *House of Fame*, in which he confesses his measure to be defective, and implores *Apollo* to make his book

“ —somewhat agréable,
 “ Tho' some verse fail of a syllable.”

This clearly proves, as Mr. Tyrwhitt has observed, that he knew the laws of metre, or he would not, in

this instance, have apologized for their violation. We must then, according to Dr. Nott's hypothesis, conclude, that, though he knew what was right, he wilfully, and with his eyes open, persisted in writing what was wrong. But we are told, that in all the ancient MSS. of his poems, the cæsura is distinctly marked; and Dr. Nott, by a series of entertaining quotations, has shown that this practice uniformly prevailed in ancient manuscripts up to a certain date. The fact is sufficiently established; but I cannot see how it supports the inference which is drawn from it, that the compositions, so distinguished, must, for that reason, have been constructed on a rhythmical, and not a metrical, system. What Adam Scrivener, as Chaucer calls him, intended by the various marks with which he adorned his pages, it is not easy, correctly to ascertain; but they would be quite as useful, and much more so, to prevent a blundering reciter from spoiling the metre "for default of tunge," as it would be to direct him in giving the proper rhythmical cadence. If he failed in the one instance, the verse was gone: but in the other, if I rightly understand what is meant by rhythmical cadence, which I suppose to bear some resemblance to a cathedral chaunt, if he gave too much or too little to one part of the line, he could easily recover his time in the remainder. Dr. Nott informs us, that these marks were disused after 1532, because our poetry had then become metrical. The word *after* is ambiguous; but if he means that this great alteration in our verse took place as early as that year, and that Surrey was its author, it is surely placing his influence on English literature extravagantly high, at a period when he was not above fourteen years of age. The extracts which are given from authors posterior to Chaucer, with a view to show that because their lines are unmetrical, the same must be said of his, by no means prove any such position. If others, in nature's de-

spight, betook themselves to writing verses, and made very bad ones, are we thence to decide that one of our greatest poets, who has occasionally exhibited the most harmonious flow, was equally ignorant of his art? As well might we contend that Shakspeare and Spenser were rugged and untuneful, because they were followed by Donne and Cleaveland. But there is one material objection to the probability of Dr. Nott's hypothesis, which remains to be noticed. Surrey lived in a learned and critical age: his rank, his character, and the melancholy close of his life, threw an interest around every thing connected with his name. Churchyard was brought up in his family; Golding was probably as old; Gascoigne could not have been born at a much later period; Surrey is spoken of in high terms by every writer on poetry in the time of Queen Elizabeth; yet not from any one of them have we the slightest intimation of his having introduced such a radical change into the whole structure of English versification. I cannot but think that their silence will prove, that he was no more the inventor of a new species of measure, than Waller, or Dryden, or Pope, though his good taste led him to select what was best in his predecessors, and to add some partial improvements of his own. Our obligations to him, as being the first to whom we owe an example of blank verse, will be afterwards considered.

If, then, our early poets are not to be excluded from a history of English metre, let us return to the point from which we set out, and inquire into the origin of the Alexandrine, and the causes of its introduction. Chaucer had, indeed, taught us what is now termed the heroick couplet of ten syllables; but it was long after his time before it assumed that rank in our versification which it now holds, without dispute, except among those who give blank verse the superiority. It was not for his Knight's Tale, or the story of Cambuscan bold, that he was chiefly admired at an early period. His Troilus was regarded as his

greatest work; and the measure in which it was composed was distinguished as "rhyme royal." The heroick couplet was thought merely adapted to a set of tales told by a company of pilgrims as they rode on their way to Canterbury, and thence was denominated "riding rhyme;" and might be used, says Gascoigne, in delectable and light enterprizes, while rhyme royal was suited to a grave discourse. King James goes further, and says, "there is ryme whilk servis only for lang historeis, and yit *are nocht verse*. As for example." He then goes on to quote some very smooth heroick couplets. Our old Scotch poet, Blind Harry, has written a "lang history" of Sir William Wallace in the heroick couplet; but when, in the sixth book, he describes his hero as "betaken with love," he seems to think the subject required a more polished measure, and deviates into the quatrain. In literature, as in every thing else, the habits of a people are not suddenly changed. The old measures which were in use before Chaucer, still retained their popularity, even in the reign of Elizabeth. Gascoigne observes, when pointing out a fault in writing, which was prevalent, as he tells us, in his time, "Yet do I see and read many new poems now adayes, whiche beginning with the measure of xii in the first line, and xiiii in the second (*which is the common kind of verse*) they will yet (by that time they have passed over a few verses) fall into xiiii and fourtene, and sic de similibus, the which is either forgetfulnes or carelesnes." If they used this licence in the measure to which they were accustomed, they would not readily submit to have their liberty altogether curtailed, when writing the ten syllable verse, but would sometimes break out into twelve syllables, or an Alexandrine. Chaucer himself could not invariably resist this temptation, at least if we ascribe to him *The Remedie of Love*, which Tyrwhitt, I acknowledge, has called in question:

“ ——— in manner as the leche
 “ His patients sicknesse oweth first for to seche
 “ The which known, medicin he should applie
 “ *And shortly as he can, then shape a remedie.*”

In the Temple of Glasse, ascribed to Hawes, but probably written by Lydgate, the following lines close one of the stanzas :

“ Of all my payne ! *helas ! the harde stounde,*
 “ *The hotter that I burne the colder is my wounde.*”

In Barclay's Ship of Fools, we meet with Alexandrines. If we compare the following with the neighbouring lines, it would seem, from its superior smoothness, that he understood that measure better than the ten syllable verse :

“ He that goeth right, stedfast sure and fast,
 “ May him well mocke that goeth halting and lame,
 “ And he that is whole, may well his scornes cast,
 “ *Agaynst a man of Inde : but no man ought to blame*
 “ Another's vice while he useth the same.”

The reader will recollect Pope's lines :

“ Tis education forms the common mind,
 “ Just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined.”

Barclay thus expresses the same image in verses better than he generally writes :

“ A little twigge plyant is by kinde,
 “ A byger braunche is harde to bowe or wynde ;
 “ But suffer the braunche to a byg tre to growe,
 “ *And rather it shall brake than outhur wynde or bowe.*”

The fame of Sir Thomas More would have been less permanent, had it rested on his poetry alone. Yet there is something pathetick in his lamentation on the death of Elizabeth, Henry VII.'s Queen. I will cite one stanza. The Queen is supposed to be the speaker :

“ Adew Lord Henry my lovyng sonne adew.
 “ Our Lorde encrease your honour and estate :
 “ Adew my doughter Mary bright of hew,
 “ God make you vertuous wyse and fortunate.
 “ Adew swete hart my little doughter Kate
 “ Thou shalt swete babe, such is thy desteny
 “ *Thy mother never know, for lo now here I ly.*”

In Lord Surrey's translation of Virgil, a few Alexandrines are mingled with his ten syllable blank verse; but Dr. Nott is inclined to attribute their introduction, not to the cause which I have assigned for their frequent occurrence in other writers, but to an alteration which had taken place in the Earl's plan. He supposes him to have originally intended that the whole translation should be in that measure, and that these Alexandrines were remnants of the poem in its first form, while the rest had been brought down to the ten syllable standard. Webbe, indeed, seems to say, that this version was composed in hexameters; but this is a term which even in modern times has been very laxly used. I cannot believe Surrey to have been the author of a performance so abounding in verbiage, that two syllables, without leaving a chasm, could be taken from every line.

When we proceed to the reign of Elizabeth, we find the Alexandrines among ten syllable lines in the writings of the most distinguished poets of that time. For example, Bishop Hall in his Satires :

"As tho the staring world hangd on his sleeve,
 "When once he smiles to laugh : and when he sighs to grieve."
 B. i. sat. 7.

"Great Solomon sings in the English quire
 "And is become a new found Sonetist,
 "Singing his love the holy spouse of Christ :
 "Like as she were some light-skirts of the rest
 "In mightiest Inkhornismes he can thither wrest."
 Lib. i. sat. 8.

"For shame or better write or Labeo write none."
 Lib. ii. sat. 2.

So also Marston :

"Pure madness cease, cease to be insolent,
 "And be not outward sober, inlye impudent."
 Sat. iv.

In modern authors the Alexandrine is always the second line of the couplet. Marston has made it the first :

“ *Euge ! some gallant spirit, some resolved blood*
 “ Will hazard all to worke his countrie’s good.”

Spenser has even introduced it into the middle of a stanza, unless we suppose the passages where it occurs to be corrupt :

“ He bound that piteous lady prisoner, now relest.”
 B. iii. c. xii. s. 41.

“ But Phlegeton is sonne of Herebus and Night.”
 B. ii. c. iv. s. 41.

The sonnet is, perhaps, of all compositions, that which is tied down by the strictest rules, and admits least of any deviation from strict metre. Yet B. Griffin, in his *Fidessa*, in which one of the poems attributed to Shakspeare is found, has this sonnet :

“ Compare me to the child that plaies with fire,
 “ Or to the flye that dyeth in the flame,
 “ Or to the foolish boy that did aspire
 “ To touch the glorie of high heaven’s frame,
 “ *Compare me to Leander struggling in the waves,*
 “ Not able to attain his safeties shore,” &c.

He thus commences another :

“ Compare me to Pygmalion with his image sotted.”

I will give one more extract from Griffin, which, I trust, its elegance will justify :

“ Care-charmer sleepe sweet ease in restless miserie
 “ The captives libertie and his freedomes song :
 “ Balme of the brused heart, mans chiefe felicitie,
 “ *Brother of quiet death, when life is too too long.*”

Thomas Watson, whom Mr. Steevens has declared to be a better sonneteer than Shakspeare, is equally licentious with Griffin in this respect. As his name has been thus opposed to that of our great poet, I will give his sonnet entire :

“ Phœbus delights to view his Lawrel tree ;
 “ The Popplar pleaseth Hercules alone ;
 “ *Melissa mother is and faultrix to the bee ;*
 “ Pallas will weare the olive branche or none ;
 “ Of Shepheardes and their flocke Pales is quene ;
 “ And Ceres rypes the corne was lately greene ;

- " To Chloris ev'ry flower belonges of right ;
 " The Dryade Nymphs of woodes make cheife accoumpt ;
 " Oreades in hills have theire delight ;
 " Diana doth protect each bubbling Fount ;
 " To Hebe lovely kissing is assigned ;
 " To Zephire ev'ry gentle breathing winde.
 " But what is Love's delight ? to hurt each where,
 " He cares not whom, with dartes of deepe desire,
 " With watchfull jealousie, with hope, with feare,
 " With nipping cold, and secrete flames of fire.
 " O happye howre wherein I did forgoe
 " This litle God, so greate a cause of woe."

Hecatompattia, sonnet 92.

I shall not undertake the defence of the Alexandrine. Even if Shakspeare had not been justified in its introduction, by the example of his contemporaries, and the writers who preceded him, I would leave it to those who have no relish for "the long majestick march and energy divine" of Dryden, and who think "cousin Swift" was a better judge of poetry, to join with the facetious Dean and Mr. Steevens, in decrying its use. But whatever may be its demerits, if it has been shown to have found a place at almost every stage of our language, and in almost every species of composition, the reader will not be surprised at its admission into the laxity of dramatick dialogue. Those of our more ancient tragedies, which were formed upon the model of Ferrex and Porrex, are distinguished by a stately and formal march of rhythm, which admits of no variety whatever ; and in them, therefore, the Alexandrine will rarely be found. If it occurs at all, we meet with it when the line begins in one speech and ends in another. Thus, in Kyd's *Cornelia* :

" CÆSAR. *Whom fearest thou, then, Mark Antony ?*

" ANTONY. *The hateful crew*

" That wanting power in field to conquer you,

" Have in their coward souls devised snares."

Others, like King Cambyzes, were, for the most part, written in the fourteen syllable verse, with more

familiarity of language. The versification of Shakspeare and his contemporaries was formed upon a medium between them both, not so formal as the one, nor so lax as the other. Marlowe, who was the greatest master of harmony in dramatick dialogue, before Shakspeare, has been sparing in the use of the Alexandrine; but in our great poet himself we meet with it in abundance. After all that Mr. Steevens has done, there are hundreds of lines in this measure which he can, by no contrivance, cut down, without totally re-writing the passage. In Massinger and Jonson they are not less frequent. I tried the experiment with Fletcher, and, on counting the number of instances in which an Alexandrine is employed, in one play, selected at random, I found in *The Loyal Subject* no less than fifty-two. It would be endless to produce instances: they may be easily discovered by the most careless reader, who will read a few pages in any one of the dramatick writers of Shakspeare's time. A similar liberty was taken in our ancient plays, where the eight syllable measure was chosen: it was sometimes mingled with the heroick ten syllable lines. In *Pericles*, wherever this takes place, Mr. Steevens applies the knife without scruple. In the very first prologue by Gower, where the meaning of the original copy is perfectly clear, he has cut out two syllables from a couplet, and owns that by so doing he has introduced obscurity; but whimsically contends that he has thus promoted the object of the author, who probably was desirous of being obscure. See vol. xxi. p. 12, n. 6. He has rendered him the same assistance on a multitude of other occasions. He adds, "Of the same licence, I should not have availed myself, had I been employed on any of the undisputed dramas of our author." If he had adhered to this rule, his slashing mode of emendation might have been pardoned. The prologues of Gower are not of that excellence that we should be anxiously

solicitous about their purity; but how is it possible to restrain a feeling of indignation, when we find him tampering with Macbeth? In Act III. Sc. V. he has twice mangled the poet upon the pretence of curing inequality of metre. I will mention one of his alterations:

“ I am for the air; this night I’ll spend
 “ Unto a dismal and a fatal end.”

This he reads,

“ Unto a dismal-fatal end :”

because the old copy violates the metre. Yet in this very scene we find, at the commencement, three lines which are equally objectionable, but which he has not ventured to touch :

“ 1 *Witch*. Why, how now, Hecate? you look angrily.

“ *Hecate*. Have I not reason, beldames as you are,

“ Saucy and over bold? How did you dare—”

But the practice of intermingling the eight and ten-syllable lines with each other, is not peculiar to Shakespeare. In Fletcher’s *Faithful Shepherdess*, one of the most harmonious poems in our language, we meet with the same variety :

“ *River God*. The blood returns. I never saw

“ A fairer mortal. Now doth break

“ Her deadly slumber: Virgin, speak.”

“ *Amoret*. Who hath restored my sense, given me new
 breath,

“ And brought me back out of the arms of death?

“ *R. God*. I have healed thy wounds.

“ *Amoret*. Ay me!

“ *R. God*. Fear not him that succoured thee.”

Act III. Sc. I.

“ *Satyr*. I see he gathers up his sprite,

“ And begins to hunt for light.

“ Now he gapes and breathes again:

“ How the blood runs to the vein

“ That erst was empty.

“ *Alexis*. Oh, my heart!

“ My dearest, dearest Cloe! oh, the smart

“ Runs through my side! I feel some pointed thing

“ Pass through my bowels, sharper than the sting

“ Of scorpion.—

" Pan, preserve me! what are you?
 " Do not hurt me, I am true
 " To my Cloe, though she fly,
 " And leave me to this destiny :
 " There she stands, and will not lend
 " Her smooth white hand to help her friend.
 " But I am much mistaken, for that face
 " Bears more austerity and modest grace;
 " More reproving, and more awe,
 " Than these eyes yet ever saw
 " In my Cløe. Oh, my pain
 " Eagerly renews again!
 " Give me your help for his sake you love best."

Act IV. Sc. II.

But there are other redundancies of frequent occurrence in our old poets. At the commencement of a line, we often find a supernumerary syllable. I will not go further back upon this occasion, than to Lord Surrey. His Elegy on Sir Thomas Wyatt begins thus :

" *Wyatt* resteth here, that quick could never rest."

Again :

" *The great* Macedon that out of Persia chased."

Some instances occur in his translation of Virgil, such as

" *Of* Deiphobus the palace large and great." B. ii. l. 395.

Shakspeare has not often indulged in this licence. In his contemporaries it is much more frequent, particularly in Massinger, where it is met with in almost every page. I will give one instance from Fletcher :

" *Thou wast* wont to love old women, fat and flat-nosed :
 " And thou would'st say they kissed like flounders, flat
 " All the face over—"

Monsieur Thomas, Act III. Sc. III.

A redundant syllable was also sometimes added at the end of a line. Words which naturally terminate in a trochee, are perpetually thus used in all English poetry, both ancient and modern. Dr. Johnson, in his Preface, has traced it no higher than to Hierony-

mo ; but it is often found in Chaucer ; as, for example, in the Nonnes Preestes Tale, speaking of Chaunticleere :

“ For when degrees fiteene were ascended
 “ Than crew he, that it might not ben amended.”

It is found, I believe, in all subsequent writers ; among others, Surrey in his Virgil :

“ There Hecuba I saw with a hundred moe
 “ Of her sons wyves, and Priam at the altar.”

But the licence which I speak of, is where two words of equal quantity occur at the close of a line, and a trochee is formed of them by an artificial accent laid upon the first*. Of this also there are not very many instances in Shakspeare ; but I will exemplify it by a passage in Cymbeline, vol. xiii. p. 212 :

“ IACHIMO. I am glad to be constrained to utter *that which*
 “ Torments me to conceal.”

So in Henry VIII. vol. ix. p. 432 :

“ Cromwell, I charge thee, fling away ambition :
 “ By that sin fell the angels ; how can *man then*,
 “ The image of his Maker, hope to *win by't*.”

I have said in a note in the passage quoted from Cymbeline, that this termination is perpetually to be met with in Fletcher. I will give one or two

* It is generally asserted that English verse depends not upon quantity, but accent alone. Surely this is too broadly stated. When Pope submitted his Pastorals to the correction of “ knowing Walsh,” he inquired whether, in the second line of the first Pastoral, which originally stood—

“ Nor blush to sport on Windsor’s peaceful plains ;”

it would be better to alter *peaceful* to *happy*, in order to avoid the alliteration. Walsh objected to the substitution of *happy* for *peaceful*, from its not being the same quantity, as the first syllable in *happy* was short. Pope assented to this criticism, and adopted *blissful plains*.

instances. In the *Maid in the Mill*, these occur in Act III. Sc. III. :

“ I do confess I am too coarse and *base*, Sir,
 “ To be your wife—
 “ You are a noble lord, you pity *poor maids*—
 “ I can cry too, and noise enough I *dare make*.”

So in the *Lover's Progress*, Act V. Sc. III. :

“ *Calista*. Heaven grant me patience! To be thus confronted
 “ (Oh! pardon, royal Sir, a woman's passion)
 “ By one (and this the worst of my misfortunes)
 “ That was my slave, but never to such *ends*, Sir—
 “ ————— I came *prepared for't*,
 “ And offer up a guilty life to clear
 “ Her innocence: the oath she took, I *swear to*.
 “ And for Cleander's death to purge myself
 “ From any colour malice can paint *on me*,
 “ Or that she had a hand in't, I can prove
 “ That fatal night when he in his own *house fell*,
 “ And many days before, I was distant from it
 “ A long day's journey.”

Again, in the same scene :

“ To free these innocents, I do *confess all*.”

But the most numerous class of offences in Shakspeare and his contemporary writers, against the laws of modern metre, consists of redundancies in the middle of a line. Thus, in *King Henry VI. P. III. vol. xviii. p. 375* :

“ And *neither* by treason nor hostility.”

Upon which Mr. Malone observes that *neither, either, whether, brother, rather*, and many similar words, were *used* by Shakspeare as monosyllables. Mr. Steevens replies that he is yet to learn how such words are to be *pronounced* as monosyllables; which is totally mis-stating Mr. Malone's position, who says that they were used, that is, they were considered as taking up the same time, as monosyllables: and that this was the fact, the most cursory perusal of old poetry will show. But this licence was not confined to any

particular words, but was generally applicable to all ; as may be fully exemplified by giving the whole of the speech from which the line in question is quoted :

- “ *K. Henry*. Not for myself, Lord Warwick, but my son,
 “ Whom I *unnaturally* shall disinherit.
 “ But be it as it may, I here entail
 “ The crown to thee and to thine heirs for ever,
 “ *Conditionally* that here thou take an oath
 “ To cease this civil war, and whilst I live
 “ To honour me as thy king and sovereign.
 “ And *neither* by treason nor hostility
 “ To seek to put me down and reign thyself.”

These two short speeches immediately follow :

- “ *York*. This oath I *willingly* take, and will perform.
 “ *Warwick*. Long live King *Henry* ! Plantagenet, embrace him.”

Mr. Tyrwhitt has observed that English metre will admit of a redundant syllable in every part of a verse. Perhaps he would have expressed himself more correctly, if he had said in any part of a verse ; but the term he has employed might be justified in its fullest extent, if he had been speaking of our earliest dramas and ballads. In *Damon and Pithias*, written as late as the reign of Elizabeth, the misery of tyrants is thus described :

- “ So are they never in quiet, but in suspicion still,
 “ When one is made away they take occasion another to kill ;
 “ Ever in feare havynge no trustie friende, voyde of all peoples love,
 “ And in their own conscience a continuall hell they prove.”

In the old fragment of the *Marriage of Sir Gawaine*, preserved in *Percy's Reliques*, we meet with the following spirited stanza, which the accomplished editor has not noticed in his *rifacimento* :

- “ And then he took *K. Arthur* letters in his hands
 “ And away he cold them fling,
 “ And then he puld out a good browne sword
 “ And cryd himselfe a king.”

My friend, Sir Walter Scott, who has dignified the old ballad measure by adopting it, has availed himself

of the liberty which it allowed in the following descriptive lines :

“ Why does fair Margaret so early awake
 “ And don her kirtle so hastilie,
 “ And the silken knots which in hurry she would make,
 “ Why tremble her slender fingers to tie.”

*Lay of the Last Minstrel, canto ii. st. 26 *.*

But this redundancy, at least to a certain degree, was by no means confined to the class of writers I have mentioned. Between the period when the laws of versification were taught us by Chaucer, till they were revived by Lord Surrey, we find a supernumerary syllable so frequently introduced, that a line thus constructed is perhaps more common than one which is regularly formed. Thus, Sir Thomas More, speaking of Fortune :

“ Sometyne she loketh as lovely fayre and bright
 “ As goodly Venus mother of Cupyde
 “ She breketh and she smileth on every wight
 “ But this chere fayned may not long abide
 “ There cometh a clowde and farewell all our pride
 “ Like any serpent she beginneth to swell
 “ And looketh as fierce as any fury of hell.”

If this licence was more sparingly used by later poets, yet they availed themselves occasionally of it, even in comparatively modern times. Milton appears to have been an assiduous reader of his predecessors, and formed his delightful Masque, in a great measure, upon an Elizabethan model. Upon this

* The harp of Sir Walter has been too long unstrung. Yet there are not wanting those who suspect that he has all this while been doing us good by stealth, and that he has spoken of the publick in the language of an OLD PLAY, “ She shall not know me : she shall drink of my wealth, as beggars do of the running water, freely, yet never know from what fountain-head it flows.” DECKER'S HONEST WHORE, 2d Part, Act I. Sc. I.

To the anonymous writer, whoever he may be, by whom we have been so much delighted, we may apply the words of another old dramatist : “ I heard, sir, of an antiquary, who, if he be as good at wine as at history, he is sure an excellent companion.”

THE ANTIQUARY, BY MARMION.

ground we may fairly consider him as a critick exhibiting his opinion as to what that style admitted of, in the most unequivocal way, by his own example. As Comus now appears, the following lines occur, among others :

“ Harpies and Hydras or all the monstrous forms,” v. 605.

“ My sister is not so defenceless left

“ As you *imagine* ; she has a hidden strength,” v. 414.

“ Not *being* in danger, as I trust she is not ;” v. 370.

As the poem originally stood, we meet with more instances of this sort of metre ; thus, instead of v. 485, as it now appears :

“ Some roving robber calling to his fellows.”

we find in his own MS. in Trinity College, Cambridge :

“ Some curld man of the sword calling to his fellows.”

He probably thought that too great an intermixture of these irregularities would be injurious to the effect of a short composition ; but he has lavishly admitted them in *Paradise Lost*. Creech was very far from being a rugged or a careless writer, yet in his translation of the first book of *Manilius*, he has these lines, describing the earth :

“ Its parts to one fixt point press jointly down,

“ And meet, and stop each *other* from moving on.”

But the principal point which we have to ascertain, is the usage of Shakspeare and his contemporary dramatists ; and here our materials are so abundant, that the only difficulty is in selection. I have already produced a passage in *Henry VI.* ; but as this play, according to Mr. Malone’s hypothesis, was not entirely written by our author, it may be considered as questionable authority. I will, therefore, produce lines from other plays, which I have taken at random :

“ And why, I pray you? Who might be your mother?
 “ That you insult, exult, and all at once,
 “ Over the *wretched*, what though you have no beauty.”
As You Like It, vol. vi. p. 459.

“ But in these cases
 “ We still have judgment here; that we but teach
 “ Bloody instructions, which being taught, return
 “ To plague the *inventor*: This even-handed justice,” &c.
Macbeth, vol. xi. p. 77.

“ I cannot strike at wretched Kernes, whose arms
 “ Are hir'd to bear their staves, *either* thou *Macbeth*,” &c.
Ibid. p. 269.

“ They say he parted well, and paid his score,
 “ And so God *be* with him!—Here comes newer comfort.”
Ibid. p. 274.

“ *Menenius*. Think on the wounds his body bears which
 show
 “ Like graves i'the holy *churchyard*.
 “ *Coriol.* Scratches with briars,
 “ Scars to move laughter *only*.
 “ *Men.* Consider further.”—
Coriolanus, vol. xiv. p. 144.

I might go on to fill pages; but the reader will apply the principle to other passages as they present themselves. Let us now look to Beaumont and Fletcher:

“ Expect a trumpet and a herald with you,
 “ To bid you *render*; we two perdues pay for't else.”
Mad Lover, Act I. Sc. I.

“ Though he *never* saw a woman of great fashion
 “ Before this day, yet *methinks* 'tis possible
 “ He might imagine what they are.”— *Ibid.*

“ Her thoughts were *merciful*, but she laughed at you.”
Ibid.

“ He turns away in scorn! I am contemned too!
 “ A more unmanly *violence* than the other:
 “ Bitten and flung away: whate'er you are,
 “ Sir, you that have abused *me*, and now most basely
 “ And sacrilegiously robbed this fair temple,
 “ I fling all these behind *me*, but look upon me.”
Queen of Corinth, Act II. Sc. I.

" ————— She's young and blessed,
 " Sweet as the spring, and as his blossoms tender ;
 " And I a nipping north-wind, my head hung
 " With hail and frosty *icicles*. Are the souls so too,
 " When they depart hence, lame, and old, and loveless?
 " No, sure 'tis ever youth there; time and death
 " Follow our flesh no more; *and that* forced opinion
 " That spirits have no sexes, I believe not ;
 " There must be love, there is love."

Mad Lover, Act IV. Sc. I.

So Ben Jonson, in his character of Germanicus :

" Sabinus and myself
 " Had means to know him *within* ; and can report him.
 " We were his followers, he would call us friends ;
 " He was a man most like to *virtue* in all
 " And every action nearer to the gods,
 " Than man in nature ; of a *body* as fair
 " As was his mind ; and no less reverend
 " In face than fame."

Sejanus, Act I. Sc. I.

So Massinger :

" ————— There's no drop
 " Of melting nectar I taste from her lip
 " But yields a touch of immortality
 " To the blest receiver ; every grace and feature
 " Prized to the worth, bought at an easy rate
 " If purchased for a *consulship*. Her discourse
 " So *ravishing*, and her action so attractive,
 " That I would part with all my other senses,
 " Provided I might ever see and hear her."

Roman Actor, Act II. Sc. I.

The poetry of that age was not only occasionally redundant, it was as often defective. Even Mr. Steevens acknowledges that an accidental hemistich sometimes occurs in our author's plays, without ascribing it to the blunders of Heminge and Condell : nor were Shakspeare and his dramattick contemporaries alone subject to this accident ; for the same measure is found in the satires of Marston and Hall :

" Say, curteous sir, speakes he not movingly
 " From out some new pathetique tragedie?
 " He writes, he railes, he jests, he courts, what not,
 " And all from out his huge long scraped stock
 " *Of well penn'd plays*."

Marston, sat. 10.

" Time was, and that was term'd the time of gold,
 " When world and time were young, that now are old.
 " (When quiet Saturne swaid the mace of lead,
 " And Pride was yet unborne, and yet unbred.)
 " Time was that whiles the Autumne fall did last
 " Our hungrie sires gapte for the falling mast
 " *Of the Dodonian oakes.*"

Hall, lib. iii. sat. 1.

As I have shown that a syllable was sometimes added to the beginning of a line, so one was sometimes withdrawn from it. Massinger is justly praised by Mr. Gifford for the general harmony of his versification; I will therefore produce two instances from his plays:

" ——— Only hold me
 " Your vigilant Hermes with aërial wings
 " (*My Caduceus my strong zeal to serve you*)
 " Prest to bring in all rarities may delight you
 " And I am made immortal."

City Madam, Act III. Sc. II.

" ——— Novall slain!
 " *And Beaumelle my daughter in the place,*
 " Of one to be arraigned!"

The Fatal Dowry, Act IV. Sc. IV.

Shakspeare, as well as his contemporaries, has sometimes indulged in this licence; but upon two occasions may, perhaps, have done it on purpose, that the sound might correspond to the sense. In the first scene of *Macbeth*, the witch says:

" Fair is foul and foul is fair,
 " *Hover through the fog and filthy air.*"

The third scene thus commences:

" 1 *Witch.* Where hast thou been, sister?
 " 2 *Witch.* Killing swine."

I may be thought fanciful, but I own, that to my ear, there seems to be something characteristick in the swinging cadence of these two lines, which would be lost if we were to make them regular, which might be easily done:

" *Let's hover through the fog and filthy air—*
 " *Say where hast thou been, sister? Killing swine.*"

Some passages, which are apparently defective, Mr. Malone has proposed to supply, by supposing that many words which are now considered as monosyllables, were pronounced as dissyllables, and *vice versâ*, in Shakspeare's time; and this, to a certain degree, is admitted by Mr. Steevens. With regard to a large class of words, namely, those in which *l* or *r* is subjoined to another consonant, the reader will find Mr. Tyrwhitt's opinion, as to the mode in which they may be pronounced, in vol. iv. p. 31, and more largely stated at p. 137, of the same volume. Mr. Malone has followed up this principle, and by its help has endeavoured to show that a line, such as the following:

“ Prove it, Henry, and thou shalt be king,”

is not deficient in its proper quantity of syllables, if we read *Henery*. It has been objected to this, that still the line would not be correct measure, as we cannot lay the emphasis on the second syllable of the name *Henéry*. Mr. Malone never contended that the measure would be correct; but only that it would be such as frequently passed current in our old English poetry. How far this was well founded, will be seen when we come to the discussion of the halting versification, that is found in our ancient writers. But as many deficient lines are found in Shakspeare, it might be a simpler explanation of such passages, to refer them to that class. Mr. Steevens allows that such words as *year*, *hear*, may be resolved into dissyllables, because they consist of two vowels; but he denies that the same process is applicable to those which have only one, such as *here*. This, I apprehend, is totally overthrowing Mr. Tyrwhitt's principle, which teaches us that the letters *l* or *r* are susceptible, in themselves, of an additional vowel in pronunciation. The licences which were resorted to by the writers of that time in lengthening or shortening words, are fully pointed out in *Three Proper*, and

Wittie, Familiar Letters, by Gabriel Harvey, in the following passage :

“ Nowe for your *Heauen, Seauen, Eleauen*, or the like, I am likewise of the same opinion : as generally in all words else : we are not to goe a little farther, either for the *Prosody*, or the *Orthography* (and therefore your Imaginarie *Diastole* nothing worthe) then we are licenced and authorized by the ordinarie vse, & custome, and proprietie, and Idioms, and, as it were, Maiestie of our speach : whiche I accounte the only infallible, and soueraigne Rule of all Rules. And therefore hauing respecte therevnto, and reputing it Petty Treason to reuolt therefro : dare hardly eyther in the *Prosodie*, or in the *Orthography* either, allowe them two sillables in steade of one, but woulde as well in Writing, as in Speaking, haue them vsed, as *Monosyllaba*, thus : *heavn, seavn, a leavn*, as Maister Ascham in his *Toxophilus* doth Yrne, commonly written Yron :

‘ Vp to the pap his string did he pull, his shafte to the harde yrne.’

“ Especially the difference so manifestly appearing by the Pronunciation, betwéene these two, *a leavn a clocke* and *a leaven of Dowe*, whyche *lea-ven* admitteth the *Diastole*, you speake of. But see, what absurdities thys yl fauoured *Orthographye*, or rather *Pseudography*, hathe ingendred : and howe one errour still bréedeth and begetteth an other. Haue wée not, *Mooneth*, for *Moonthe* : *sithence*, for *since* : *whilst*, for *whilste* : *phantasie*, for *phansie* : *euen*, for *evn* : *Diuel*, for *Diwl* : *God hys wrath*, for *Goddess wrath* : and a thousande of the same stampe : wherein the corrupte *Orthography* in the moste, hathe béene the sole, or principall cause of corrupte *Prosodye* in ouer many ?

“ Marry, I confesse some wordes we haue indeede, as for example, *fayer*, either for beautifull, or for a

Marte: *ayer*, both *pro aere*, and *pro hærede*, for we say not *Heire*, but plaine *Aire* for him to (or else *Scoggins Aier* were a poore iest) whiche are commonly, and maye indifferently be vsed eyther wayes. For you shal as well, and as ordinarily heare *fayer*, as *faire*, and *Aier*, as *Aire*, and bothe alike: not onely of diuers and sundrye persons, but often of the very same: otherwhiles vsing the one, otherwhiles the other: and so *died*, or *dyde*; *spied*, or *spide*: *tryed*, or *tride*: *fyer*, or *fyre*: *myer*, or *myre*: wyth an infinite companye of the same sorte: sometime *Mona-syllaba*, some time *Polysyllaba*."

Many words in Shakspeare's time were occasionally written with a vowel, which they have now lost, which, according to Wallis, might be considered as a remnant of the *e* feminine in our ancient language. He has specified *commandment*, which, even when he wrote, was considered as a word of four syllables. We certainly find it so used by Jonson:

"But when to good men thou art sent

"By Joves supreme *commandment*."

Love Restored, folio 1616, vol. i. p. 994.

Cavallery is used for *cavalry*, by Massinger:

"——— I in mine own person

"With part of the *cavallery*, will bid

"These hunters welcome to a bloody breakfast."

The Maid of Honour, Act II. Sc. III.

Nor was this confined to poetry. Thus, in Grimeston's translation of Polybius, 1634, p. 80: "At first the Gaules had the better, for that the Roman horsemen were surprized by theirs. But being afterwards environed by the Roman *Cavallery*, they were broken and defeated."

Spenser makes *safety* a word of three syllables:

"O goodly golden chayne wherewith y fere

"The vertues linked are in lovely wise

"And noble minds of you allyed were

"In brave poursuitt of chivalrous emprise

"That none did others *safety* despize."

Fairy Queen, b. i. canto ix. st. 1.

In Hamlet, see vol. vii. p. 216, Mr. Malone states, that the quarto, 1604, reads,

“ The safety and health of this whole state; ”

where he supposes that *the* before *health* was inadvertently omitted. We may doubt, upon Spenser's authority, whether there was any omission. One class of verses have hitherto been considered as defective, but erroneously in my opinion. In the first scene of Macbeth this passage occurs. See vol. xi. p. 12 :

“ 1 *Witch.* Where the place ?

“ 2 *Witch.* Upon the heath.

“ 3 *Witch.* There to meet with Macbeth.”

The second of these having been considered imperfect, the reader will see, at the page referred to, the remedies which have been proposed. In Love's Labour's Lost, vol. iv. p. 371, I have mistakingly printed

“ She for whom *even* Jove would swear

“ Juno but an Ethiop were.”

In the old copies *even* is omitted, and thus we find it also in the Passionate Pilgrim, see vol. x ; and in England's Helicon. I am satisfied that our ancestors had a measure consisting of only six syllables, and that both the lines quoted were perfectly correct as they originally stood. I have come to this conclusion, not only because other instances are to be found in Shakspeare's plays, but in many of his contemporaries. Thus, in A Midsummer Night's Dream :

“ *Puck.* Over hill, over dale,

“ Thorough bush, thorough briar ;

“ Over park, over pale,

“ Thorough flood, thorough fire,

“ I do wander every where

“ Swifter than the moon's sphere.”

Vol. v. p. 199.

Again :

“ Up and down, up and down,

“ I will lead them up and down.”

Ibid. p. 283.

So also in the Epilogue to the Tempest:

" Now my charms are all o'erthrown,
 " And what strength I have's my own;
 " *Which is most faint: now 'tis true*
 " I must be here confined by you.

* * * * *

" Gentle breath of yours my sails
 " Must fill, or else my project fails,
 " *Which was to please: Now I want*
 " Spirits to enforce, art to enchant."

Vol. xv. p. 182.

It is true that there are seven syllables in the lines which I have here marked by italicks; but a syllable may be either added or not at the beginning of such verses, as the common measure may consist of seven syllables or eight. If we had merely these several instances to produce from Shakspeare, we could scarcely consider them all as accidental corruptions; yet it might still be considered as a practice peculiar to himself. I have now to show that the same may be found in his contemporaries. The following, among others, occur in Fletcher's Faithful Shepherdess:

" By that heavenly form of thine,
 " Brightest fair, thou art divine,
 " Sprung from great immortal race
 " Of the gods, for in thy face
 " Shines more awful majesty
 " Than dull weak mortality
 " Dare with misty eyes behold
 " *And live! Therefore on this mould*
 " Lowly do I bend my knee." Act I. Sc. I.

" Here be berries for a queen,
 " Some be red, some be green." *Ibid.*

" I must go, I must run." *Ibid.*

" There I stop: fly away—
 " Truth that hath but one face—
 " Hecaté with shapes three." Act III. Sc. I.

" Up and down every where
 " I strew these herbs to purge the air,
 " Let your odour drive hence
 " All mists that dazzle sense.

* * * * *

" Let her fly, let her scape,
 " Give again her own shape."

Ibid.

Let us now turn to Ben Jonson :

" Look, see !—beshrew this tree——
 " She can start our Franklins daughters
 " In her sleep with shrieks and laughter,
 " *And on sweet St. Anne's night*
 " Feed them with a promised sight——
 " *Mab.* Fairies, pinch him black and blue,
 " Now you have him, make him rue.
 " *Satyr.* *O hold, Mab I sue.*——
 " But see, the hobby-horse is forgot,
 " *Fool, it must be your lot*
 " To supply his want with faces
 " And some other buffoon graces
 " *You know how : piper play."*

Entertainment at Althorpe.

As the seven or eight syllable measure was divided into two short ones,

" With ravished ears
 " The Monarch hears ;

so, also, out of this were formed two still shorter :

" Here we may
 " Think and pray,
 " Until death
 " Stops our breath.
 " Other joys
 " Are but toys."

Various lines in Shakspeare, and the poets of his time, which sound harshly to a mere modern ear, are brought back to regularity by resorting to a different accentuation, such as, *détestable* for *detéstable*; *aspéct* for *áspect*; and many other instances which are adverted to in the notes. Yet still the number is not

inconsiderable, which by no process whatever can be rendered harmonious. The defence that must be set up for Shakspeare is, that his contemporaries were equally faulty in this respect. It may be observed, that this defect is scarcely ever found but in the heroick metre of ten syllables. Those who wrote smoothly in a shorter measure, fall into the most hobbling versification when they attempt the heroick couplet. The smaller pieces, for instance, of Nicholas Breton, have a very pleasing flow, of which the well-known ballad,

“ On a hill there grows a flower,”

may be cited as an instance. But the same writer, in his “ Sir Philip Sidney’s Ourania,” has exhibited the most deplorable specimens of doggrel that the language can supply. The commencement of his Shepherd’s song will show in what measure he intended to compose :

“ Before this world, quoth he, was set in frame,
“ Or any thing had essence forme or name.”

Yet we soon after find him hobbling in this manner :

“ Yet were no angels as then created,
“ Nor angels offices destinated ;
“ Nor could their attendance do him pleasure,
“ In whom consisted all blessed treasure :”

and the greater part of his poem is much in the same strain. But much higher names than Breton are liable to a similar reproach. Thus, even Spenser :

“ Faire seemely pleasaunce each to other makes
“ *With goodly purposes there as they sit.*”
Fairy Queen, b. i. c. ii. st. 30.

Again :

“ Vile caytive vassall of dread and dispayre.”
B. ii. c. iii. st. 7.

Thus also Massinger :

“ Heaven forbid
 “ I should divert him from his holy purpose
 “ To worldly cares again! I rather will
 “ Sustain the burthen, and with the converted
 “ Feast the converters.”

City Madam, Act III. Sc. III.

Again :

“ I never saw him
 “ Since he swoon'd in the presence when my father
 “ Gave audience to the ambassador.”

Bashful Lover, Act II. Sc. II.

Again :

“ His desires were that
 “ Assurance for his safety might be granted
 “ To his royal Master, who came as a friend,
 “ And not as an enemy, to offer to you
 “ Conditions of peace.” *Ibid. Act IV. Sc. III.*

I could multiply quotations on this subject; but these will suffice to show, that when Shakspeare fell into these irregularities, he was countenanced by the practice of his contemporaries; that the attempts at emendation to get rid of those are wholly unnecessary; and that there was not the slightest foundation for the sneers of Messrs. Ritson and George Hardinge, when Mr. Malone asserted that such verses were tolerated in our poet's time. The ten syllable heroick line is, perhaps, the most difficult species of verse in our language, as it is in truth the longest; the Alexandrine and that of fourteen syllables being, in fact, two short ones joined together. If a wrong accent is placed on any one word, the line loses its character, which is essentially iambick, with the occasional mixture of other feet for the sake of variety, and falls into an anapestick cadence. Take, for instance, the first line of Pope's Essay on Man :

“ Awake my St. John, leave all meaner things.”

Pronounce the name of that infidel nobleman as if he had been a saint; or for “leave all,” read “desert;”

or for "meaner," read "despised;" and the verse becomes doggrel*. That great poet, by his example, has so tutored the ears of his countrymen, that the lowest scribbler now writes with tolerable smoothness, which was very far from being the case even in Dryden's days. Our ancestors, as we have seen, with all their excellence, were sometimes neglectful of strict harmony; but this, at least in our dramattick poets, was amply compensated by the vigour and vivacity of their general style. Their plays were, for the most part, written in blank verse; yet sometimes upon no sort of system, but merely as fancy suggested, they deviated into rhyme, which they quitted and resumed at their pleasure. This was the frequent practice of Shakspeare, more particularly in his early plays, but it was not peculiar to him; it was adopted by all the dramattick authors of his time. In Johnson's *Sejanus*, Act III. Sc. I. we find this fully exemplified. Decker has even admitted this intermixture of rhyme into so short a composition as a prologue, as, for example:

"The charmes of silence through this square be throwne
 "That an unused attention (like a jewel)
 "May hang at every eare, for we present
 "Matter above the vulgar argument:

* What our ancestors meant by *rhyme doggrel*, may be learnt from Freeman's *Runne* and a *Great Cast*, 1614:

Epigram 36: *quis cladem.*

"More did not Dulake, nor Godfry of Bullen,
 "Bevis of Hampton, nor Guy Erle of Warwicke,
 "The Knight of the Sun, the three Kings of Cullen,
 "Nor all the world twixt Dover and Barwicke,
 "Nor any man if his cap made of woollen,
 "At land at see without Castle or Carricke:
 "Feeders on mans flesh, blood-suckers brave Jack
 "Hath thumb'd many thousands, and kil'd with a knacke."

Epigram 37.

"Whoop, whoop, me thinkes I heare my Reader cry,
 "Here is *rime doggrell*; I confesse it I," &c.

- “ Yet drawne so lively that the weakest eye
 “ (Through those thin vailles we hang between your sight
 “ And this our piece) may read the mistery :
 “ What in it is most grave will most delight,” &c.

Prologue to the Whore of Babylon, 1607.

In their selection of rhymes they were not always very scrupulous. In *Love's Labour's Lost*, vol. iv. the following passage occurs, as it is printed in the old copies, and Mr. Malone's text :

- “ Taffata phrases, silken terms precise,
 “ Three piled hyperboles, spruce affection,
 “ Figures pedantical : these summer flies
 “ Have blown me full of maggot ostentation.”

Affection, in the second line, had been changed, by the modern editors, into *affectation*. Mr. Malone restores the old reading, and observes, that *affectation* had already, in the same play, occurred in the sense of *affectation* ; that it was a quadrisyllable, and that the rhyme was such as our author and his contemporaries thought sufficient. Mr. Steevens, on the other hand, declares that no ear can be satisfied with such rhymes as *affectation* and *ostentation* ; and Mr. Ritson, in his Remarks upon Mr. Malone's edition of 1790, has displayed a good deal of clumsy merriment upon the occasion. Yet what would either of them have said to the following passage in Spenser ?

- “ Who soon as he beheld that angel's face
 “ Adorn'd with all divine *perfection*,
 “ His cheered heart eftsoones away gan chase
 “ Sad death revived with her sweet *inspection*.”

Fairy Queen, b. iv. c. xiv. st. 34.

Or what must we think of the following stanza from Fairfax's *Godfrey* ?

- “ Prepare you then for travaile strong and light,
 “ Fierce to the combat, glad to *victorie* :
 “ And with that word and warning soone was dight
 “ Each soldier longing for neere coming *glorie*,
 “ Impatient be they of the morning bright,
 “ Of honour so them prickt the *memorie*.”

Fairfax's Godfrey, b. i. st. 66.

I now release the reader from the discussion of the irregularities which occur, either in the phraseology or metre of Shakspeare, which would have been an ungracious enquiry, were it not for the recollection that the slight spots which the most minute and scrupulous investigation can discover, are lost in the blaze of his excellence. I am now very shortly to call the reader's attention to the important change which he effected in our dramattick versification. Although I am unable to bestow upon Lord Surrey the praise which is claimed for him by my friend Dr. Nott, of having been the first who taught us metre, yet he is justly entitled to our gratitude for the introduction of blank verse into our language, which it is probable he was induced to adopt from the example which had been shown us by Italy, a country from which we have derived every real improvement in poetry, that we have borrowed from our continental neighbours. Dr. Nott is disposed to call this in question, on the ground that the *Italia Liberata* of Trissino was not published till after Surrey's death. He forgets that the *Sophonisba*, of the same author, had appeared before that nobleman was born, and that *versi sciolti* had become not only popular in Italy, but had been adopted at an early period in Spain. But although Trissino has had the honour generally ascribed to him of being the first who wrote in that measure, because he was the first who brought it to perfection; yet we learn from Crescimbeni that it existed in a ruder state in Italian literature long before his time. The Italians, indeed, seem, from the facilities which their eminently poetical language affords, to have led the way in every experiment upon metre. Thus, long before Sidney or Gabriel Harvey had taught English to halt on Roman feet, the same attempt had been made by Tolemei, with better materials, but not with much success. But whatever may have been the origin of Surrey's

blank verse, it is exhibited in his translation of Virgil in a very imperfect state. It is formal and stiff. It reads as if it had originally been written in rhyming couplets, and the terminations subsequently altered. This measure was afterwards adopted by a still more distinguished ornament of the English aristocracy, who, as the author of the first tragedy in our language that at all deserved that name, and from his sublime Induction to the *Mirror for Magistrates*, may be considered as, in some degree, the precursor both of Shakspeare and Spenser. To him we owe the application of blank verse to the drama. Yet still, even in the hands of Sackville, it was heavy and pompous. The first who attempted to introduce any variety of pauses, was a writer whose name can never be mentioned without pain. If Marlowe had not led a life of profligate dissipation, which, perhaps, hastened his death, he would probably have held a very high rank among the poets of his country. He who was at the same time celebrated for his "mighty line," and could produce that exquisite specimen of pastoral sweetness, *The Shepherd to his Love*, was capable, under better auspices, of the greatest efforts of genius. In his *Edward III.* we occasionally meet with passages which exhibit the varied flow of succeeding poets :

" A heavy case ;

" When force to force is knit, and sword and gleave
 " In civil broils make kin and countrymen
 " Slaughter themselves in others, and their sides
 " With their own weapons gore ! But whats the help ?
 " Misgovernd kings are cause of all this wreck :
 " And Edward, thou art one among them all
 " Whose looseness hath betrayd thy land to spoil,
 " And made the channel overflow with blood
 " Of thine own people."

His translation of the first book of *Lucan*, is a very spirited performance ; and as I know of no other

copy but that which is in Mr. Malone's collection, I will produce a specimen. It is from the speech of Lalius, the centurion. See Lucan. lib. i. l. 361 :

" What, doubtst thou us? even now when youthful blood
 " Pricks forth our lively bodies, and strong armes
 " Can mainly throw the dart; wilt thou endure
 " These purple groomes? that senates tyranny?
 " Is conquest got by civill war so hainous?
 " Well, lead us then to Syrtes desart shoare;
 " Or Scythia; or hot Labiae's thirsty sands.
 " This hand that all behind us might be quail'd
 " Hath with thee past the swelling ocean;
 " And swept the foming brest of Articks Rhene.
 " Love overrules my will, I must obey thee;
 " Cæsar, he whom I heare thy trumpets charge
 " I hould no Romaine; by these ten blest ensignes,
 " And all thy several triumphs, shouldst thou bid me
 " Intombe my sword within my brothers bowels;
 " Or fathers throate; or womens groning wombe;
 " This hand (albeit unwilling) should performe it."

But although these and similar passages evince that Marlowe's ear had sometimes taught him to release blank verse from the fetters which had been imposed upon it, yet the general strain of his versification resembles that of Surrey and Sackville. At last Shakespeare arose, who was destined to carry the drama in all its parts to the highest state of perfection; and even in the structure of his verse, not only left all his predecessors far behind him, but exhibited to those who came after him, a model of harmony which no one has ever surpassed. Perhaps no species of metrical excellence can be mentioned, which is not exemplified in his plays. He has equally avoided the formal monotony of those who went before him, and the laxity of his contemporaries; his metre is generally correct; but the inexhaustible variety of his modulation never palls upon the ear. Whether "that spirit of his, in aspiration, lifts him from the earth;" or humbler topicks require a more subdued tone; whether he is

sublime, pathetick, familiar, or gay, the colours of his style, and the musick of his cadence, are adapted with the most exquisite skill to the character which he designs to paint, or the sentiment which he wishes to express :

“ So on the tip of his subduing tongue
 “ All kinds of arguments and questions deep,
 “ All replication prompt and reason strong,
 “ For his advantage, still did wake and sleep,
 “ To make the weeper laugh, the laugher weep.
 “ He had the dialect and different skill,
 “ Catching all passions in his craft of will.”

I have withdrawn from the Index, which will be found at the close of this work, those references which relate to the topicks discussed in the foregoing Essay, that the reader may have the materials, upon which he is to form his opinion, at once before him. I have not put down every exemplification of what has been stated, but have thought it would be sufficient to produce as much as would establish the principle.

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* For a multitude of particles similarly misapplied in the writings of the age of Queen Anne, see Lowth's Grammar, p. 166. Edit. 1775.

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END OF VOL. I.



